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Helen Heckman—A recent portrait.

MY LIFE TRANSFORMED

By

HELEN HECKMAN

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1928

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TO ALL
WITH REAL OR FANCIED HANDICAPS
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

FOREWORD

To those who pick up this book with the expectation of finding it the usual autobiography, dealing with the author's experiences in public life and her association with famous people, I would have them know that it is not an autobiography of this type; for broad professional expression lies with the years ahead of me rather than those behind. This is a story of accomplishments in the making, instead of one depicting what has been done with them. It is a story of a life remade,—a soul reborn,—showing the forces that made for this metamorphosis.

HELEN HECKMAN.

Onapah-on-Cayuga, Ithaca, N. Y.,
November, 1926.

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MY LIFE TRANSFORMED

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CHAPTER I

Deepening Shadows

FATE, that intangible and incomprehensible force over which man holds no control, played a strange caprice in shaping the course of my existence; for it seems that she actually gave me two lives to live, instead of one. On the first, those twelve bleak years devoid of joy and knowledge, I shall not dwell longer than to narrate the principal facts, and the incidents necessary to the thread of my story, but shall pass quickly on to what I term my other life, which, after all, has made possible this autobiography.

I was born in Manito, Illinois, a small village some twenty miles south of Peoria, on December 10, 1898, and enjoyed normal babyhood until the age of eleven months, when I was stricken with Spinal Meningitis. That speech did not set up soon after my recovery from this dreadful disease, at the age when most children begin to talk, gave my parents no alarm, for they thought I was merely backward in this respect as a result of the illness I had suffered. So a year passed, then another,

and I was over three before my father and mother learned the real reason for my silence. It was then that physicians told them that I would never talk,—that the disease had left me totally deaf.

When I was three and a half years old, my father, Philip E. Heckman, sold his interest in a general merchandise business in Manito to his partner, an older brother, and brought the three of us, my mother, brother and myself to Muskogee, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), where he became a real-estate broker. He built a cottage at the edge of the prairie, just outside the village, where, four years later, a little sister, Mildred, destined to be so great a force in my life, was born.

There was much in this new country to interest the normal child and satisfy his natural longing for adventure. To my brother, Chester, then a boy of seven, the blanketed Indians, and the cow-boys astride their broncos, were a source of boundless delight, but to me they were fear-inspiring. Even the playful antics of my brother as he grew older, and raced his pony across the open country back of our house in harmless imitation of these people, filled me with terror; and no loving assurance from him or my mother could alter these impressions, or convince me that he was acting in the spirit of play. And this was but one of the many things I could not understand, and which could not be explained to me by reason of my affliction.

Vividly I recall the mental torture from pent-up emo-

At the age of two years.

About 3½ years old.

About seven years of age.

tions which I suffered in my own efforts at play with other children, and the outbursts of temper that resulted from my inability to cope, through the medium of speech, with some perplexing situation in which I found myself.

I can remember of having been swung so high and so long, against my wishes, that when finally released from my plight, I would throw myself onto the ground, kicking and screaming with rage. And often, after having been boosted into some tree or to the top of a fence, I have been left there, trembling with fear, and clinging desperately lest I fall, while the other children scrambled down and ran off to some new amusement, either ignoring my cries of entreaty for help, or laughing at me.

My only happy memory of such playtimes is when loving arms carried me away from the scene of my troubles.

Already the dark cloud of fear and ignorance was sending its shadows across my pathway and shutting me off from the hearing world and its natural activities.

Need one wonder, then, that I found more satisfaction in play by myself with dolls and cats, which occasioned little or no mental conflict within me. I never tired of dressing and undressing the dolls, or adorning the kittens with bonnets and ribbons.

The fact that I was unlike the children I knew did not occur to me until I was about seven years old, when one day my mother invited the little girls of the neighborhood in to spend the afternoon with me. They brought their dolls, and for a time we played happily together.

Then I noticed that they had laid down their playthings and were merely moving their lips, which performance was, of course, meaningless to me. I wanted to play, and after unsuccessful attempts by motions to make them pick up their dolls again, I flung mine to the floor and screamed in anger. This wail of the deaf child so frightened the children that they all ran and hid; nor could they be induced by my mother to remain for further play that afternoon.

I was still crying when they left, beating my lips with my hand and pointing toward them. Mother knelt beside me and pointed to her ear and toward the departing children with a nod, then to my ear with a shake of her head, trying to make me see why they had moved their lips and what it meant, and that they could understand with their ears while I could not.

Soon these neighborhood children began to shun me whenever they saw me. They, too, felt the shadows that were shutting out the sunshine from my life.

Certain impressions of this period of childhood, which are stamped indelibly upon my consciousness, show that I formed ideas of my own in the bewildering world of silence, though they were often crude and without foundation. For instance, I thought that the wax figures in the show-windows of the stores were dead bodies, placed there on exhibition. Search as I may, I cannot account for this strange notion in connection with death.

The September preceding my eighth birthday, I was

With Chester in the new country.

All ready for a trip back to the Institution.

placed in an institution for the deaf and dumb, my parents believing this to be the best they could do for me. Here with deaf-mutes, several hundred of them, boys and girls of ages ranging from eight to twenty, to mingle with, I came to a full realization of the meaning of my condition,—that the reason why my lips had not moved in speech as did those of the children back home with whom I had played, was that I, like these hundreds of others, my associates, was deaf, and therefore dumb.

With this great number to observe and imitate, it was not long before I had learned most of the "signs" they used in lieu of words, many of which struck new terror to my soul.

I shall never forget that first Thanksgiving time, when several of the little girls, in trying to tell me of the coming feast, drew their fingers across their throats in attitudes of malicious glee, which motion was their sign for "turkey." Wishing, I suppose, to make me understand that I was to share in the pleasures of the turkey-dinner, they pointed to me; but I misconstrued the action to mean that my head was to be taken off, and I ran screaming with fright to the matron.

Well, too, do I remember the sign-interpretations given me of the shadows which played upon the wall at night, across from the barred windows of our room, and the overpowering fear that they brought to my mind.

I was shown by hideous facial and bodily expressions, when seeking from my companions the sign-name for

these shadow-forms, that they were antics of the devil tormenting me because I had been bad; and that the light which often shone through the transom in the night was from the lantern of a thief who would sometime carry me off. I never knew what moment the "devil" might step down from the wall or the "thief" pounce upon me; and many were the nights, after having been sent back to my own corner, when I crept into bed with a room-mate for protection, that I sought the floor beneath my cot to sleep, where I could not see my tormentors if I wakened or uncovered my head.

Not until years later, until after the dawn of my new life, did I learn that these dancing shadows on the wall of my room had been made by the breezes stirring the branches and leaves of the trees between the arc-light and the building; and that the light which came and went in the corridor was only from the watchman's lantern as he made his rounds, or else due to the passing of the matron on some emergency visit to a nearby room.

With my implicit belief in the explanation given me by my sign-making companions of these forms of light and shadow, one can readily imagine my sensations of terror at the sight of the dark masses of moving clouds and the flashes of lightning accompanying a thunder-storm.

In June, 1908, when I was nine and a half years old, my dear mother died. My father's problem, after her death, so far as I was concerned, was quickly settled;

for my Aunt Louise wished to mother me. So it was decided that I should return to Manito with her and Uncle Louis (my father's former business partner), and go to them each summer thereafter, during the ten or more years I would be going to the institution.

Grandmother Foster offered to take care of Mildred, my baby sister, who was eighteen months old, so my father provided a house for the two in Manito where Grandmother preferred to live. Father rented the home in Muskogee, reserving rooms and board for himself and my brother.

CHAPTER II

The Dawn of a New Life

During the Christmas holidays of the year 1909, my father met a Miss Vina Janet French, a native of New York State, and late of Washington, D. C., while she was a guest in the home of Miss Alice M. Robertson, then postmistress of Muskogee, and later congresswoman from the 2nd Oklahoma District.

Miss French visited Muskogee again in the late spring, when the school in which she was teaching closed for the summer vacation; and the following August she became my new mother. In accordance with Miss Robertson's wishes, the wedding took place in her beautiful country home, "Sawokla," which had just been completed.

At that time Miss Robertson prophesied wonderful things for me under the influence of my step-mother, but she little realized then, so she has told me, how wonderful they were to be.

On the return home from the wedding-trip, my father and mother stopped in Manito for Mildred, and made my uncle and aunt a visit,—the dear relatives who had so lovingly cared for me when I was motherless.

Mother had seen me in Muskogee earlier in the summer, and she had been impressed by my pitiable condi-

The new Mother.

At the age of thirteen years, with hair partly "relieved of its burdens."

tion. She had discussed this with my father and suggested that I spend my vacations after the marriage at home under parental care, but he had emphasized the fact that I would have to continue to live summers with my uncle and aunt, for they looked upon me almost as their very own, and it would grieve them to have me taken away.

How well do I remember the day that decided my future; it was the very morning that my parents were making ready to leave with Mildred for Muskogee. Although I could not understand the conversation which took place regarding me, my aunt explained its significance to me on her fingers.

Aunt Louise was busy in the kitchen, and my father stood in the doorway talking to her. I was in the living-room, hovering about my mother, wildly gesticulating and making such awful sounds that my aunt asked Father to come in and quiet me, lest I annoy Mother. "See what is the matter with Helen," she said. My father, at Mother's quick and eager suggestion, called out to my aunt, "Maybe Helen is trying to make her new mother understand that she wants to go home with her."

Then my aunt came into the room and said that she believed it would be better for me if Mother would take charge of me during the summers, as I was becoming more and more difficult to manage each year,—that while I was very dear to her and they would miss me greatly, she felt that Mother was more capable than

she of giving me the firm guidance I needed. And it was thereupon arranged that I would go to Muskogee the following June and live at home summers thereafter.

As Mother was putting on her hat to leave, Aunt Louise handed her a card on which was printed the deaf and dumb alphabet, saying, "Do not forget this, Janet, for you will have to learn these symbols before Helen comes to you next summer."

Two deaf boys, young men rather, had called at my aunt's home the previous day, and their gestures and uncouth sounds had so affected Mother that she told my aunt she would never learn the finger alphabet or any signs in order to get along with me. As these cards were issued by the institution I attended, so that parents might learn the finger language and converse, through this medium, with their children when with them, it was thought that Mother was little less than crazy when she left the card behind.

I know now that many would have sought to avoid any responsibility of my future, but Mother took me into her heart and home when she could easily have found excuses for not burdening herself with me. My condition alone, which she had in a measure realized from observation, and conversation with my aunt, would have been sufficient reason, to say nothing of Mildred's poor health and blighted life and the needs of a fifteen-year-old boy at this important period of his life.

. . . . . .

During the past few years the village of Muskogee had crept well out to our home, even beyond it, and we no longer lived in the country. The cottage, too, had been enlarged; but I scarcely noticed these changes when I arrived that next summer with a neighbor who had been visiting a relative near the institution.

Mother met me at the door and warmly embraced me. Mildred lay ill with Whooping-cough and Scarlet Fever, but I was neither interested nor affected. Even had she been well enough to greet me, there would have been no sweet, sisterly exchange of words; for I could not talk.

As the care of Mildred took much of Mother's time for several weeks after my home-coming, I was left largely to myself during the day. I would swing for hours in the hammock on the porch, pounding the side of the house with my foot to keep up the motion; and, when Mother could endure this noise no longer, she would come to me and gently lead me into the house, seating me in a rocking-chair. Here I would rock back and forth, hitting the floor vigorously with my feet with each forward movement of the chair; and, when my rocking forced the chair partly off the rug onto the floor, each rock sending its thump throughout the rooms, Mother would come again and smilingly pull the chair, with me in it, back to the center of the rug.

Sometimes she would lay a book on my lap as I rocked, hoping that I would amuse myself with it, but I would let it slip to the floor untouched and unnoticed. I did

not know the meaning of enough words in the simplest of primers to get the chain of thought in a story; and books, even their pictures, held no interest for me. Neither would I pick up the book, which I had let fall to the floor, and would walk right over it when I changed my position from chair back to hammock, or wandered down to the barn to play with the bit of string which I kept in my middy pocket.

When Mildred's convalescence became such that she could play in the living-rooms and on the porch, Mother was able to give more thought to the problem which I presented.

One evening in August, after the dinner was over, Uncle John (Mother's brother who was visiting us at the time) insisted that she lie down in the hammock and rest while he watched over Mildred and me.

He and Mother became so absorbed in the discussion of my condition and my needs that they did not see Mildred and me leave the porch, and it was some time before they became aware of our absence. Uncle John admonished Mother to be quiet while he looked for us, thinking, of course, that we were somewhere about the house. She finally joined him in the search, and not finding us, telephoned all the neighborhood friends, only to learn that none of them had seen us.

My brother, just home from a picture-show, then got on his wheel without delay and started out, taking the streets back of our house first, and going the whole length

of each, then proceeding to those which lay in front. He found us about ten o'clock, wet to our knees, and bespattered with mud, wandering aimlessly about on a vacant lot five blocks from home.

Later Mother learned that this incident was but one of the many times I had strayed away, regardless of time or place or my inability to get back alone. On this occasion Mildred, no doubt measuring my judgment by my size, had thought me old enough to know what I was about, and had followed me when I started off, just as any small child would do with an older member of the family.

Each day of the advancing summer brought some new instance of my deplorable condition to Mother's attention. One evening, leaving Mildred and me together for a moment on the porch where she could see us, she started across the lawn to talk with a neighbor. Screams caused her to quickly retrace her steps, and she found Mildred lying on the ground near the porch. I had angrily kicked her off when she had accidentally touched my knees in passing before me as I rocked.

As children had tormented me, so I now tormented Mildred. When dressing in the bath-room of a morning, and Mother would leave us together, I would take some article of her clothing and throw it behind the bath-tub where she could not recover it. My attitude, as I see it today, was little less than fiendish as I stood over her and made her cry and beg for her belongings.

Summer was passing, and it was generally understood that I would return to the institution. But Mother had heard of schools for the deaf where children learned to talk, and she had written, soliciting a place for me. Naturally, in this correspondence, she did not emphasize the worst side of my condition, but merely stated that I was twelve years of age, had been totally deaf since babyhood; that I could not talk, and used signs. The replies which she received to her letters were hopelessly discouraging, for she was told that it was impossible for one of my advanced age to learn to talk; furthermore, that I would impair the standards of any oral school by the signs which I used.

Since this avenue of learning was closed to me, it now became necessary that Mother begin preparations for my return to the institution.

In discussing these problems with my father, as Mother did daily, she frequently suggested that I be kept at home where she could at least attempt to teach me, through the medium of writing, some of the things which my limited range of thought would be able to encompass. My father, though, insisted that such a course was impracticable, nay impossible; for Mother, with two other lives to set right, already had more than her share of work to do.

But Mother was a woman of broad vision and deep sympathy; her heart yearned over my affliction and my future. She not only thought of the long years I was to

spend at the institution, but of those which stretched beyond. What was to be my life? What was eventually to become of me?

Only a few days remained of the summer vacation, and Mother was still fighting the thoughts of my leaving.

Then came the decision. And, with emotions which showed conclusively that her resolution could not be shaken, she rushed upstairs, hauled out my little trunk from its place in the attic; dumped its contents of coarse woolen dresses and gingham aprons upon the floor, bundled them up for charity, and with an air of finality, let fall the lid of the trunk.

I was never to go back to the institution again.

CHAPTER III

Beginning All Over Again

Now that Mother had assumed the responsibility of my life, she began to think seriously of a plan by which she might effect a change in me. I was in my thirteenth year, and she realized that time was too precious to be wasted in mere sympathy,—that the loss of even a day from the few remaining years of my formative period might materially lessen my chances for the improvement which she hoped to bring about in me. She must hasten to awaken my interest; to weed out the bad habits which possessed me; to prepare a fertile spot in my mind in which to plant the seed of knowledge.

So the very next morning after breakfast, Mother took me upstairs to my room and had me help her make my bed. Then, on the following morning, before we left the breakfast-table, she opened her tablet before me and wrote the word "bed," taking me directly to my room, where we repeated the lesson of the previous morning. Ere long I was making the bed by myself while she stood by and watched me.

Now came the training of my memory in order that I could go to my room at the proper time, independent of suggestion, and do the bit of work assigned me. At this

stage, at the close of the meal, Mother would simply point to the word "bed" in the tablet and lift her eyes in the direction of my room; then she would take me to the foot of the stairs and leave me to go on by myself.

Presently she would follow to see how I was getting along, but would find me off in another room shaking and dangling my string with languid satisfaction, having forgotten my objective, the bed, before I got upstairs. At such times she would direct me to my room, and once started, I would go through my task without stopping.

It required many weeks of such practice before I could think of the bed-making exercise myself and go straight to my room without any reminder.

Thus was my sleeping mind awakened to some sort of constructive and independent thought activity.

In the meantime, Mother had discovered that my knowledge of the written word and its meaning was confined to approximately fifty words, principally nouns.

One day, when we were waiting outside for Father to drive around with the horse and carriage, she walked up to one of the posts of the porch and touched it with her pencil; for by this time her tablet and pencil had become a part of her costume, whether for the house or street. She handed me the tablet that I might list the name of this part of the porch, which she had thus indicated. I wrote "house." She pointed to the steps, and again I wrote "house." She then drew down a limb of the big

maple tree by the porch, and I put down the word "tree." She touched the trunk; she pulled off a leaf; she put her foot on a root protruding from the ground. Still I wrote "tree."

Mother was overwhelmed with the realization that I did not know the names of even these commonplace things, and that at the age of twelve and a half years, I would have to learn, would have to be formally taught, the names of objects about me which the hearing child acquires naturally and incidentally long before he is five.

In my meager vocabulary of the written word, "bench" covered every kind of a seat from a stool to a davenport; therefore I did not know the name of the very chair in which I rocked. Hence, in teaching me the names of the household furnishings, Mother began with the rocking-chair, proceeding throughout the rooms until she had covered all the variations of a seat. She would write the name of each in her tablet, and require me to copy it before passing on to the next. Afterward, we would make the rounds again and this time she would merely indicate some name in the list, and if I knew its corresponding object, I would go and stand by it.

In this manner I learned the names of everything in the house, and incidentally was being trained to really use my eyes,—to take notice of my surroundings.

As my study of indoor things had begun with the rocking-chair, so that of outdoor objects started with

the hammock. The morning stroll about the lawns and up and down the walk in front, and the evening drives, all became mediums for study. In the drives through town, I was expected to watch the sign-boards and write in my tablet such simple words as we were studying and I was able to recognize.

Not having known the names of the things I passed in drives of previous years, and therefore having had no occasion to look to the right or left, I had become accustomed to settling myself down comfortably in the seat of automobile or carriage, looking straight ahead and enjoying the pleasurable motion just as I did that of the rocking-chair or hammock. Thus, before I could derive any studious benefit from the drives which Mother planned for me, it became necessary for her to arouse me from this state of passiveness, in order that thought connection might take place.

For the first time since babyhood, I had worn white dresses, shoes, and stockings daily throughout the summer and autumn. Early in the summer, to further interest me in personal appearance, Mother had bought me a lovely white parasol which I had used in our walks together; but not for long, due to the many times I let it fall. I seemed to lack the firmness necessary to keep hold of the parasol for any length of time, whether it was open or closed, and I ruined three that first summer by dropping them.

I moved about with a looseness of body, dragging my

feet; and often, without apparent cause, stumbled and fell. And, as a result of continual slumping in sitting and walking, I was becoming quite round-shouldered. Mother realized that some corrective measure had to be employed immediately, so she fitted me with shoulder-braces, which I wore until my pride and will power were sufficiently developed that I could keep my shoulders up myself.

Moreover, she knew that if I was to gain mental and physical alertness, she would have to insist upon a well-balanced diet. I ate almost nothing but meat, gravy, potatoes, bread (white), syrup, pastry, and candy. I would not eat vegetables, excepting Irish potatoes; neither would I eat salads, and I refused even to try to like them. When urged, I would pretend that each mouthful made me ill. But Mother persevered, and eventually I learned to enjoy all kinds of vegetables and salads to the extent that I now wonder how I ever could have disliked them.

My hair was naturally curly, and during my early childhood it had been kept in curls; but after my eighth year I had been required to wear it in braids. When I came home to live the braids were wound around my head and fastened on each side with two huge ribbon-bows, and my hair otherwise ornamented with two side-combs, a circular comb, and a barrette.

Many times Mother had endeavored to interest me in again wearing my hair in curls, by contrasting the braids

with Mildred's lovely curls and showing me pictures of pretty girls in magazines. She even taught me to comb Mildred's hair in the hope that this daily practice would create a desire to have mine fashioned in like manner. But to no avail; I clung to my braids and ornaments.

One morning, after much petting and coaxing, Mother succeeded in relieving my head of its burdens, and unbraiding my hair. She drew my chair close to the window, brushing and spreading out the long tresses so that I could see the glints of gold playing through them in the sunshine, and then began to shape my hair into curls. It was with much difficulty that each curl was made, for as soon as she had slipped it off her finger, I would attempt to straighten it out. She held the mirror before me from time to time as she progressed, showing me how the soft curls made a beautiful frame for my face, and how pretty I would look for "Papa" when he came home to luncheon.

The task finally completed, Mother was obliged to leave me to answer the telephone. While she was out of the room I shook out every curl and put my hair back just as it was before. The work of a whole morning had gone for naught.

But Mother's persistence always won, and before the coming of spring I was not only curling Mildred's hair unassisted, but my own as well, which I arranged in four curls fastened with a barrette, my only ornament, low against the back of my head. And I became so proud

of my curls that I wore my hair in this style until seven years later, when a spell of fever robbed me of them. The new hair came in curlier than ever, and as my friends told me that I looked much better with it short, I did not let it grow out again.

Winter was advancing and it had been four months since Mother began my training. Thus far she had so managed me that there had been no extreme spells of temper like those I had been accustomed to having in previous years, when I would fling myself to the floor, or even into the street, if my path of ease was crossed.

The string-playing habit had worried Mother from the very beginning, but to have deprived me of this amusement too soon would have meant a recurrence of the tantrums, and a loss of all she had gained in the way of improving my disposition. But now, she reasoned, it was best not to let me practice the habit any longer; so she began to wean me from it, making no reference, however, to her intentions.

One morning, when I felt in my middy pocket as usual for the string, it was not there. But as a bit of cord was always to be found somewhere, I soon had another to play with. Then it became necessary for Mother to hide every piece of twine that came into the house.

But deep-seated habits of this kind are not to be uprooted so easily, and she discovered that I had found substitutes for the string which answered quite as well. For, while dressing or undressing, I would use my stock-

ings to dangle and twirl, and frequently throughout the day would shake my handkerchief when I thought no one saw me. Mother, though, was always appearing at just the right time to see me and remind me that she and Mildred did not do such silly things. The habit gradually wore itself out, but it was three years from the time Mother began taking the strings from me that I was completely rid of this senseless amusement.

There were so many destructive forces within me at this time, antagonistic to development, that Mother often felt she would never succeed in clearing the way for a wholly constructive program.

And many times she became discouraged and dissatisfied with the results of her labor, though I did not know it then, for she never showed it. Nevertheless, my improvement was already such that friends who frequently saw me were surprised at the change which had taken place in my condition. Mother has often told me that without the encouragement and sincere appreciation which our friends and neighbors lent to her efforts, her struggles would have seemed much harder.

CHAPTER IV

The Awakening of Voluntary Interest

I HAD, it is true, made considerable progress in the short time I had been under Mother's care, but not from any initiative of my own. The element of interest, which is so marked in the hearing child, and in the young deaf child as well, had long ago ceased to function within me. How to revive this important factor was the chief problem of the moment.

Although I was doing the little tasks each day which had been taught and assigned me, I would still walk over a book, paper, or toy without picking it up, and move about generally with a total absence of spontaneity, and with an attitude of indifference to any change in my surroundings.

Nor did I ever manifest the slightest desire to learn anything new of my own accord or to know the reason for anything Mother might be doing, whether I was engaged in actual study or in following her about as she performed her household duties.

She would occasionally serve Mildred's and my lunch together on a little table in the living-room, hoping that this pleasant variation from the customary meal in the dining-room would be the means of calling forth some

slight change in my actions or facial expression. But even Mildred's delight and eagerness as she rushed to the table had not the least stimulating effect upon me.

After all manner of ways had been tried to recall to life this element of interest, and had proved unsuccessful, one night after I had gone to bed, Mother placed two large pictures, strong in contrast,—Washington's and Napoleon's,—on the library table, where I would be sure to pass them many times on the morrow in my wanderings about the house.

Days passed, and still the pictures lay there for my benefit, while she patiently waited for me to notice them. She had begun to feel that this scheme, too, would be a failure, when finally, to her great joy, I paused before them.

She saw me look at the picture of Washington, then at the picture of Napoleon, and watched me again seek the kindly face of Washington and concentrate my attention upon it. Rushing to where I stood, she wrote in her tablet, "WASHINGTON—NAPOLEON": "I like Washington," nodding pleasantly at his picture as she underlined the sentence. Then, imitating the frowning expression with which I had viewed the other, she finished with "I do not like Napoleon."

This episode marked the awakening of voluntary interest; and with it began my study of simple American history and geography, for Mother showed me a picture of Mount Vernon and explained by writing and by mo-

tions that this had been George Washington's home long, long ago, also that she had been there many times.

Turning to a map of the United States, she drew my attention to the dot above the name Muskogee, guided her pencil across the page to the word Washington (explaining by writing that this, too, was a city, but much larger and far more beautiful than Muskogee); then showed me that Mount Vernon was close to this city which bore George Washington's name, and told me by the use of pictures and sketches of her own, that she had gone by boat on a beautiful river when visiting this historic home.

By watching her measure with her pencil the distance from Muskogee to Washington, and that from Muskogee to the dot on the map which she had made to represent Manito, I was able to get some idea of how much farther one would have to travel to reach Washington than this point in Illinois where I was born.

So the picture of George Washington was the means of starting into activity that element so necessary for my betterment.

I like to live over again the happenings of that day which played so important a part in the shaping of my future.

I see my mother as she rushed to her room; I feel the quickness of her return. I see her fingers as they flew with ribbons and lace and net, and recall the haste with which materials were put together. I sense the anxiety

she must have felt lest she be too late to utilize the interest which the picture of Washington had enkindled, and to make it the impetus for greater things in my development.

No fairy tale which I have since read has seemed to me more beautiful than did my little story of the Master of Mount Vernon, when Martha Washington became a part of it.

I love to think of how I lived into my fairy story the very evening of that eventful day, when Mother in her improvised colonial costume, and I in mine, assumed the rôles of George and Martha Washington and made calls upon the neighbors.

My wise mother-teacher so directed my interest in this characterization, as it was reënacted from time to time, that its influence was manifold.

Her gallantry, in imitation of this perfect gentleman, as she assisted me up and down the steps and escorted me across a street, made such an impression upon me that George Washington not only became my hero, but a model by which all other men were later to be judged in courtesy and honor.

As time passed and I was capable of fuller understanding, I was taught to exact courtesy "because I was Martha Washington." Likewise, when I failed to respond to a point of nicety which Mother might be trying to develop in me, she would remind me that "Martha Washington would never have done that."

And now Mother told me that all fine ladies like Martha Washington knew how to embroider, so she began to teach me simple stitches and the names pertaining to this form of study.

Early in the winter I had come to know that everything in the house, also outside, which we had theretofore studied for the learning of its name, had to be taken time and again for further study.

Throughout the winter we had made tours of the home to learn the names of the principal parts of many of these objects. A chair, I found, has "legs," "back," "rounds"; a picture, "frame," "glass," "wire," "hook." And on each little study-trip we made, when teaching me the name of one of these parts, Mother would list it in my tablet at the extreme right of the name of the object itself, with the verb "has" between, leaving spaces on the line for the definite and indefinite articles and qualifying adjectives, which were to be taken up later.

Coincident with these lessons on the details of things, she had been teaching me words of action, verbs, through bodily demonstration, presenting them to me in pairs of contrasting meaning whenever possible. She would walk, run; sit, stand; fall, rise; go out of the room, come into the room; jump over a book, crawl under the table, and explain other words in like manner, stopping after each action to teach me the corresponding name and show me how to incorporate it in a simple declarative sentence. With verbs that could not be given me through such

demonstration, she would make rough sketches or show me pictures in books or magazines to illustrate their meaning.

Mother's determination that I should constantly improve was so strong within her that there was scarcely a moment of the day, no matter what she was doing, when thoughts for my development were not uppermost in her mind. Even when obliged to go to the kitchen for the preparation of a meal or the washing of the dishes, she kept me by her, useless as I was, lest some opportunity for the impartation of a bit of knowledge to me be lost. I have seen her in her busiest moments, in the absence of pencil and paper, snatch a piece of soap from the sink and write upon the window-pane some word or thought pertaining to the work she was engaged in.

Thus did each day contribute something to my little fund of knowledge, and make for steady progress.

CHAPTER V

Speech and Its Problems

One evening, shortly after the episode of the pictures, as we all sat about the reading-table, I taking my embroidery lesson and making the usual breath-sucking sounds which accompanied anything I did requiring mental or physical effort, some one alluded to this annoyance, as though it were a garment, like a coat or a dress, to be cast off with but a suggestion.

Mother replied that this habit, as well as that of "smacking" when eating, was due to the fact that my mouth was constantly open.

When asked why I did not keep it closed, she explained that I had no reason to do so, since I had never learned to talk,—that had the organs intended for speech functioned, my jaw would not have sagged to its present position, leaving my mouth open, and I would be breathing naturally through the nose.

As this statement was questioned, Mother called attention to her lips as she brought them together for the utterance of "m," thus showing her hearers how even this one speech principle effected a closing of the mouth. She forthwith brought my lips together and tried to get me to imitate her in forming this labial, by having me

place my fingers well across her mouth in such a manner that I could feel the vibrations of this sound as she voiced it.

My response was so like the grunt which I was in the habit of making whenever the least bit of physical exertion was exacted of me, that it evoked much laughter and the exclamation, "You certainly aren't foolish enough to think that she could ever be made to talk!" To which Mother replied, "I do not know yet as to that, but it was meant that she should talk, you know, and I am going to make every effort to see that she does."

Mother was then asked how she expected to bring about oral expression in me when persons in that field of work had concluded that such a thing was impossible for one of my years and condition. And she was reminded that she knew nothing whatever of this phase of teaching, even under the most favorable circumstances,—with a young deaf child, taken before youthful interest is lost and deterioration of the speech muscles sets in.

She thereupon told the family that she had begun the speech work with me that very day,—that the demonstration they had witnessed a few minutes before was one of the many lessons which she had worked out nights by herself, with the aid of the mirror, long after they had gone to bed.

I shall never forget the difficulties we encountered with those first speech lessons she gave me.

My mouth would not stay closed, and Mother found

it expedient at times to pin a bandage tightly around my head under the chin, to aid me in keeping the jaw up in place.

The upper lip, through lack of muscular action in speech, would not function normally for the forming of the labials "m," "b," and "p"; and she had to work it downward at each lesson, and massage these dormant muscles frequently throughout the day, so that eventually I would be able to bring my lips together properly for speech.

My tongue was soft and lifeless, and Mother saw that something must be done to remedy this condition before she could give me the vowels and other consonants. So she massaged it many times a day to promote circulation. And, in order that proper constriction might take place, she gave special attention to the spot where a vowel or consonant was to be formed.

In studying these positions on her tongue, I was required to first dip my fingers into my own bowl of antiseptic ized water, then place the forefinger of one hand on her tongue and that of the other on my own, and try to make the action of my tongue correspond to that of hers as she voiced the vowel or consonant under study.

The sounds I produced in these speech attempts were already so guttural that Mother's good judgment told her it would be unwise to place her hands upon my throat or have me study hers in this manner, lest my thoughts be directed and centered there. Before each speech prin-

ciple was given me (and this has been her policy ever since, with the young deaf child as well), I was made to understand that I must think of the vowel or consonant as being sounded above the upper jaw. This was hard for me to do, as so much thought had to be given to the action of the tongue, and deep breathing.

My respiration consisted of short, panting-like breaths, and special physical exercises were given me with a view to establishing a habit of correct breathing.

In teaching me my first word, "mama," Mother found that the final vowel left my lips apart after each utterance, and thus encouraged the open-mouth condition; so she had me say "mam-mam" for a time instead, for the influence which the ending consonant would have upon keeping the mouth closed.

She made no attempt to teach me in speech the names of everything I had learned through writing, as many teachers would have done, but, rather, confined her efforts for several months to the building up of the speech muscles through countless repetitions of a small number of words, embodying a variety of sounds, which were constantly undergoing correction and improvement.

I often think and talk of the trials Mother and I both experienced in those days of speech struggles, and of the character of my utterances at that time. It gives me great satisfaction and pleasure to contrast my easy-flowing speech of today with the laborious, mechanical, and guttural efforts of those first few years.

Time and again throughout that winter, following the beginning of what I call my new life, Mother had tried, in various social ways, to overcome my dislike for contact with strangers,—hearing people,—but always with discouraging results; for I continued to run and hide when such persons happened to enter the home, and refused to follow Mother and Mildred into certain places where people were congregated.

On Washington's birthday, Mother had given a dinner-party for me, inviting twelve girls whom I had already met, and requesting them to come in couples dressed as boys and girls of colonial times. Mother, as George Washington, was the host, and I, as Martha, the hostess.

In the rehearsals with Mother for this event, much emphasis was laid on the only thing that I could do for my guests at that time,—smile for them.

The jolly activities of the evening and my interest in the beautiful costumes which the girls wore, should have made me feel that I had something in common with persons in general in this new world of hearing associates, and called forth the smiles expected of me. But the evening passed, and so far as my efforts were concerned, it was a failure; for the lively step of the grand march had so forced me out of my customary easy-going gait, that a feeling of resentment took possession of me and ruled my being for the entire evening.

The moment the door had closed upon the last guest

of the party, Mother placed a mirror in my hand and made me stand and gaze at my reflection until I had brought a smile to my features. Then, drawing my arm within hers, she required me to practice the march with her for the proper mental and physical attitude.

All along, Mother had thought of travel as the best means to rid me of this feeling of aversion in connection with hearing people; but to break into the work already gotten under way for a trip based upon this single purpose, was out of the question.

Now, however, she saw that the interest I was beginning to take in my surroundings would make it possible for me to derive much studious benefit from a trip; and she began to give the plan serious consideration. She acquainted me with the thought of a journey, then asked me where we should go, knowing well that my answer would be "Mount Vernon."

So Washington, "the city of magnificent distances," with its interesting governmental and historic buildings, where I would come in contact with the throngs of sightseers which surged through them daily, was the place decided upon as best suited to my needs.

Mother had hoped that we could be ready to start by the last of May, but there were certain features of my condition,—such as the "smacking" while eating, and grunting when dressing, walking, or otherwise exercising, —which had to be further worked upon before I could be

taken away from home. Thus it was not until late in June that she was able to set a definite date for our leave-taking.

She took me to the calendar and showed me that the number 26, in the month of June, represented "today." Then, moving her pencil over the remaining numbers in this month and on through those of July, she drew a circle around "31," and explained that this meant the day on which we would depart for Washington and Mount Vernon.

And that night before going to bed, she had me cross off "today" on the calendar, and made me understand that we were one day nearer to the time for our journey.

Soon I was marking off the days myself as they closed, with no reminders from Mother; for this simple act had become a great pleasure, fed as it was by thoughts of seeing Mount Vernon.

CHAPTER VI

Away to Mount Vernon—the Home of My Hero

At last I had reached the circle indicating the date of our leave-taking for Washington and Mount Vernon,—there were no more numbers to be crossed off on the calendar. It was July 31, and we were starting on our journey.

On the short trips which I had made in previous years, the going had meant nothing to me but the pleasant sensation of being carried along by the swift-moving train.

But now how different! As the train sped onward, I was learning the names of outstanding objects of city and country. These Mother first jotted down in her tablet for me to copy and learn; then, as the objects repeated themselves from time to time, and I could recall their names and write them myself, she aided me in forming sentences with them such as "The hill is large; the knoll is small." "The hill is larger than the knoll; the knoll is smaller than the hill." And after awhile, she was writing, "The mountain is very large; it is larger than the hill." "The knoll is the smallest of all."

In Mother's correspondence with an old Washington chum, she had mentioned her plans and the purpose of our

visit to the city; and to our delight we had received an invitation to make this friend's home our stopping-place. Mother had been assured that we could go and come as we pleased, and that my studies would not be interrupted; so she looked forward to a highly profitable and pleasurable summer for me.

On the way, Mother explained to me that we would rest for a day in Washington before going on to see Mount Vernon. But the evening of our arrival I became so moody that she saw she would have to make the trip at once, for my attitude was a form of interest and could not be ignored.

Thus the very next morning found us sailing down the Potomac.

The boat itself, though I had never been on one before, was of no interest to me, save that it was taking me to the home of George and Martha Washington. Mother placed our deck-chairs well back toward the cabin where it was shady, but I found a seat farther up in front next to the railing, and sat there immovable until we landed. The sun at times poured its hot rays down upon me, but I was going to Mount Vernon, and was going to get just as close as I could to its bordering waters, regardless of any discomfort.

I often think of the unerring judgment which has pervaded Mother's work with me from the beginning, and which has always told her when, where, and how to impart knowledge to the best advantage for me.

The morning of the boat trip to Mount Vernon.

Embroidering in the pleasant outdoor nook—Washington, D. C.—Summer of 1912.

Many teachers, fired with ambition such as hers for my advancement, would have insisted upon a studious attitude on my part throughout this portion of the trip as well as on the train, and would have continued the practice of teaching me as we passed along, likewise enlightening me as to the names of the innumerable features of the boat, of which I knew nothing. But not so with my wonderful mother-teacher, who knew that I could not possibly be responsive to teaching now, with Mount Vernon so near, and my mind fixed upon the one thought that my golden dream was about to be realized.

I had imagined Mount Vernon as being down by the river, for the reason, I suppose, that most of the pictures I had seen were close-up views; and, too, because of my inability to form a correct mental image of its exact location from the explanations which had been given me in writing. Consequently, I kept scanning the immediate shore-line for the place, upon learning that we were approaching it.

As the boat drew nearer and nearer, I felt a touch on my arm; and, raising my eyes in the direction Mother indicated, I beheld the stately, white columns which told me that at last my fairy story had become a reality.

Following the usual crowd of sight-seers off the boat and up the winding driveway, we came to the tomb of Washington. Here I stood as one entranced, so strange were my feelings in the solemn presence of the hero of my studies. Mother finally induced me to leave this

sacred spot by calling my attention to the quaint coach which stood nearby. This, like everything I saw within the mansion, fascinated me when Mother told me, by writing, something of the part it had played in the lives of the members of the Washington family. In learning the name of the article called a bed-warmer, and the office it had filled, I thought this the oddest thing of all.

After our tour of the house, as we sat on the charming veranda, feasting our eyes on the beautiful picture of land, sky, and water which stretched before us, Mother told me of a place on the other shore, known as Marshall Hall, and that George Washington used to cross the river to this attractive estate, to visit its master, his good friend Judge Marshall.

Although we spent the entire day at Mount Vernon, strolling about at will, I was reluctant to board the boat which was to take us back to Washington, and left good-naturedly only with the promise that we would come again before returning to Muskogee.

Throughout our stay in Washington, I followed a plan by which one-half of each alternate day was given over to drills on vowels and consonants, work on new words, consistent with my speech development, and reviews of those previously learned, also to the study of what I had seen the day before. These lessons pertaining to the sight-seeing trips consisted of questions and answers on the most important features, Mother writing the ques-

tions in my tablet and aiding me in answering them correctly, and in good sentence form.

These ideas were then built up into letters, simple in construction, to my friends back home, which practice was good language and memory training for me.

All this matter, as well as the notes which Mother made on the things we saw, was preserved and used the following winter as a basis for further and fuller study in our written language lessons.

On the days of our excursions, Mother, Mildred, and I would start out immediately after breakfast. Frequently, however, Mildred went to play with a little chum in the sand-piles at the edge of the Zoo in Rock Creek Park. And, by the way, the Zoo, with its splendid specimens of animal and bird life, and the natural beauties of the park itself, furnished me with many subjects for name and language study, and we made several trips through it.

Arlington, Fort Myer, Fort Washington, the Washington Monument; the Capitol, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum, the White House, and Corcoran Gallery of Art all contributed more or less to my gradual intellectual development.

In the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and other places where great numbers of people were intent upon their respective pieces of work, Mother explained to me how each individual had had to study in order to qualify for his or her position, thus impressing upon me the

necessity for conscientious effort on my part at all times, if I were to succeed in my own endeavors.

At the Capitol I met two very interesting persons,—Senator Heyburn, and Addison T. Smith (now Congressman from Idaho),—men with whom Mother had one time been associated in her work there.

We spent a day at Arlington; and there, when sitting beneath some shady tree to rest, Mother called my attention to the characteristics which made for its beauty, then taught me its name. It was here, in this pleasant and natural manner, that my study of trees began; and before I left Washington, I had become familiar with many varieties and their names.

Of course the fact that, many times before, Mother had visited the places to which she was now taking me, and had many a story thereof to tell me in writing, helped largely to quicken my interest in what I saw, and was of immense value to me.

The mingling with crowds, together with this increasing interest in things in general, was beginning to bring about a change in my looks and attitude. I was more observant and responsive.

But my enemy, fear, still lingered in my consciousness, and at times broke forth in unexpected places with its old-time domination. Often it threatened disaster, as when I would stop dead-still in the middle of a street and stand there, afraid to go on, thereby seriously interfering with Mother's plans for crossing. It mattered not

that she held my arm firmly within hers, and assured me beforehand of her ability to pilot me safely across the street,—that there was nothing whatever for me to worry about,—I continued the practice which was endangering our lives.

One day, when I stopped right in the street as usual, and we barely escaped being run over by an automobile, Mother gave my arm a pinch, which proved an effective remedy for this state of mind. Thereafter, the mere thought of the pinch sent me across the most crowded streets with Mother and Mildred, without even a sign of hesitancy.

Afternoons, as a rule, following the sight-seeing trips, or our at-home studies, I had a warm bath and a nap, thus resting both mind and body from the strain of constant study. Afterward, I had my lessons in speech and embroidery. The evenings were practically free from study, and I often spent an hour or so in visiting friends with Mother, or went riding about this "City of broad thoroughfares." An early bedtime was always strictly observed.

The practice of studying myself in the mirror was still followed, and frequently Mother would tell me how much brighter my face was becoming. She would also coach me into attitudes of animation in order that I might appear to better advantage before my new-found friends.

In that home where we visited that summer, there were two young men of jovial habits,—bachelor brothers

of our hostess,—who vied with each other in their endeavors to arouse me from my passiveness.

In the late afternoon, just before the dinner-hour, when I would be sitting with my embroidery on the back porch where the vines made shade over the trellis, or in the yard amid the palms and flowers, the boys would get their sister's cups, saucers, and plates from the kitchen, and juggle them up and down, then back and forth to each other from porch to the extreme end of the yard, creating much hilarity among all except myself. Not even the slightest mishap ever occurred; but the thought that I might, at any moment, see the dishes fall into pieces at their feet, so worried me that it was some time before I was able to enjoy their "stunt" sufficiently to reward them with a smile.

Robert, the elder of these jolly friends, still delights in making fun for me, and letters filled with humorous stories of his own activities, and witticisms on things he has seen or heard, come to me from time to time. I never know what to expect when opening one of his letters, so varied are his subjects for jocular treatment.

I have often wondered since how Mother survived that summer; for she was tired out, to begin with, from innumerable household responsibilities and the care of the family, besides the year's nervous work with me, with no respite from any one of these duties. Only her naturally strong constitution, perfect confidence in her ability to accomplish the work she had begun, and faith

in the rest of us to do our part could have enabled her to keep well with so much lost energy.

Many a time she could have made the task easier for herself had she weakened in her ambitions for me, and deviated from her purpose. Frequently, for instance, while in Washington, she could have enjoyed the use of a friend's car and been restfully transported from one place to another. But this would not have been in keeping with her plan of development for me; for the primary object of the trip was to throw me with crowds, and besides, I needed the exercise of walking and the stimulus which it gave to my mind.

CHAPTER VII

Homeward—A Side-trip of Profitable Pleasure

In the southern part of New York State, not far from the Pennsylvania line, there lies a village rich in historical interest, bearing the unique name of Painted Post.

It was here that we came, on the trip homeward from Washington early in September, to visit Grandmother French and Mother's sister. And it was the latter who, on the very day of our arrival, conceived the idea of staging a little play for me in the form of a joke on an old friend of hers, who had gained the title of "Judge" by the years he had served as justice-of-the-peace in the village.

About eight o'clock, when the occupants of the cozy homes along the street had settled down to their reading or other affairs for the evening, a tall, distinguished-looking man in broadcloth suit and silk hat, with a young lady all in white clinging to him, knocked at the door of Mother's sister's home, and asked the way to the nearest minister.

"Why," Aunt Nellie replied, "how fortunate that you happened to inquire of us; Judge Simms, the justice-of-the-peace, is here now and could . . ."

"Yes, marry us," prompted the supposedly prospective groom.

The couple stepped over the threshold, but Judge Simms explained that he would have to go home for the necessary blanks, and begged to be excused long enough to do so.

Aunt Nellie stood in the doorway until he was halfway down the block, then called him back and told him that the couple was none other than her sister and newfound niece,—Mrs. Heckman and Helen,—whose expected visit she had previously acquainted him with, and the very persons he had called to see.

The Judge enjoyed the joke equally as much, if not more than the rest of us, even though it was on himself; and I was much pleased over the part I had played in this little comedy.

The bit of vacation, which I was now having, not only brought me new friends, but also opened up for me a new field of thought,—that of the Indians and their activities in this locality in the early days of our country.

That I was now on the very spot where the Red Men had roamed in George Washington's time impressed me greatly; and the picturesque stories that Mother wrote for me on their life in this beautiful valley, removed from my mind much of the prejudice I had felt toward the Indian since childhood.

In teaching me the origin of the name of the village, she told me that long, long ago the Indians, in assembling

from far and near for their councils and making of treaties, had marked their place for meeting with a post, which they painted red.

She took me to the business section of the town, and showed me the very spot about which she had been telling me, explaining by writing that the post now standing there was the one which the white settlers had erected in place of the original. Then, crossing the street to the public square, where stood the large, stone monument, topped with a life-size Indian in bronze, we read together the inscription, which I copied into my tablet:

"To Perpetuate the Name of
PAINTED POST:
Preserve Its Traditions,
and Honor the Memory of
Its Early Settlers."

One morning, during this visit in the historic village, I awoke with a feeling akin to excitement over the plans for the day; for we were going to see Mother's girlhood home some twenty miles away,—the farm where she was born.

As we drove up the beautiful Cohocton Valley along the clear and sparkling river, and through the pretty villages, she frequently pointed out some scene which had figured prominently in her childhood and girlhood days. Here, nestling among the hills, was the hamlet of Thurston, where she had often walked to Sunday-school

or on errands for her mother; and there, on the brow of the hill, two miles beyond, was the very schoolhouse where she had gone to school.

The school grounds adjoined the farm and we halted for a moment at this point, so that I might view the big, stone farmhouse which lay in a shallow, bowl-like valley all its own, and gaze over the fields and woodlands that sloped gently down to orchard, brook, and gardens.

We had lunch at the farm, and before leaving, Mother showed me many spots endeared to her by childhood association. She took me to the place where she had kept her pets, the lambs (sometimes as many as six or eight), that her father gave her each spring when the ewes refused to mother them, and which she raised herself to maturity.

Mother had not told me of the different route we would take on the way back to Painted Post, as she had hoped that by now the new scenes along the way would awaken in me expressions of surprise, and cause me to write in my tablet, without prompting, some word, descriptive of an especially attractive object. But it took a far longer time than the one year's training to develop in me such initiative.

The road, by which we were returning, lay between wooded hills; and, after covering five miles or more, we came out upon beautiful Goodhue Lake so suddenly that it seemed we were driving straight into it. But a sharp turn of the road brought us alongside this lovely sheet of

water, and we followed it to the other end, to the grounds where Mother had come picnicing in her girlhood. Here we stopped long enough to give me my first experience in fishing.

The next day we went to Hammondsport, at the head of Lake Keuka, so that I might see the vineyards for which this section of the state is noted. We were invited to walk into one of the finest, and Mildred and I enjoyed the rare treat of eating grapes right from the vines.

In passing through Bath, a lovely village eight miles north of Mother's old home where we had been the day before, she showed me Haverling Academy, where she had attended high-school.

I also made a trip to Watkins Glen. This scenic wonder, with its cool, rocky depths, and water falling from great heights into dark, mysterious-looking pools, was a form of Nature which rather depressed me at that time. Since then, I have been through the glen many times, and have learned to enjoy to the fullest this marvelous expression of Nature.

In a few more days, our visit in Painted Post was over, and we took up our trip homeward.

CHAPTER VIII

Spiritual Awakening

It was in that autumn of 1912, following the Washington trip, that motion-pictures became a force in my education. We had gone to the picture-show but seldom theretofore, as the time so spent had been a total loss to me; for I could watch a picture only in the attitude of a baby, following the flitting forms and changing scenes with no associated ideas.

Now, however, my intellectual development was such that I was able to view a picture with thought activity; so Mother introduced this form of entertainment into our routine as a regular feature, for its educational value, and that I might not too greatly miss the summer's innumerable diversions.

In the beginning, the sole studious requirement which Mother made of me in connection with this recreation was that I press her hand upon recognition of an object of which I could recall the name, or a word which we had studied preparatory to seeing the picture, and which she had known would be thrown upon the screen.

But to my way of thinking, the picture-show should carry with it no mental effort whatever, and all that Mother wrote regarding the value of our time, and the

necessity for some gain in everything I did, failed to make the least impression upon me.

After we had several times spent an afternoon at the theater without the expected mental and physical response to what I had seen, she gave me to understand that if I did not follow her instructions the next time we went, she would take me out of the picture-house, and bring me home immediately.

The following week, after having studied and reviewed as usual the name and character of the picture we were planning to see, Mother was confident that the afternoon would bring the profit she desired, as a result of the previous lecture. Too, she felt that my great liking for this amusement would cause me to yield to her wishes, rather than have the pleasure taken away from me entirely.

But I was no different on this occasion than before, and sat stolidly in my seat, letting numerous opportunities pass without showing her by the hand-pressure that I had recalled the name of some object, or recognized a word we had studied. When a feature, which she had stressed that very day, remained on the screen longer than usual, and I still ignored it, she touched me on the arm to suggest the mental application required of me. I drew away from her and shrugged my shoulders as though to say, "No thought shall invade this realm of ease."

Mother at once arose, and while I knew exactly what she intended to do, I refused to follow, and she was

forced to take me firmly by the arm and lead me out. Had she said one word to me on the homeward trip, without doubt I would have thrown myself to the sidewalk in a fit of temper. But she wisely maintained silence.

Mother knew that eventually motion-pictures, rightly chosen, would be of great assistance to me in my studies of history and geography, also nature subjects, and she was determined not to lose this opportunity. So, upon arriving home, she emphasized this point, as well as the fact that we could not afford to spend money on anything that brought no worth-while returns.

The storm of resentment, which had been gathering forces within me for weeks regarding the subject of pleasurable profit vs. thoughtless amusement, now burst in all its fury, and I flung myself to the floor, pounding it with all my might and shrieking with anger.

But Mother's strength was equal to the occasion. She finally got me to my feet, then forced me upstairs to my room, bidding Mildred follow with the big, old family Bible. She placed this enormous book on the floor and commanded me to kneel upon it in an attitude of prayer.

Sitting on the edge of my bed, Mother talked for an hour, it seemed, without stopping, regardless of my inability to understand her. Yet, by her looks and actions, and the words "pray" and "God," which she wrote in bold letters in the tablet and held up before me from

time to time, I understood the import of her message and caught something of its uplifting spirit.

By degrees my feelings softened, until my conscience was touched. Mother then took me up into her arms, and tears from my heart, the first she had ever seen me shed, fell like torrents of rain suddenly loosened from some overhanging storm-cloud.

Almost from the beginning, even before I had acquired any words for speech expression, Mother had had me kneel each night with Mildred when the bedtime prayer was said. For some time now, I had been saying the simple "I love Mama—I love Papa—I love God" prayer which she had taught me to voice. But until recently it had meant nothing to me but a form,—something to be performed like making my bed or dressing.

I had seen Mildred baptized early in the autumn, but this, too, had been meaningless to me at the time or later, when Mother had tried to explain, in writing, its significance.

Now, with my spiritual awakening, I began to understand the purport of prayer, and the ritual I had witnessed; and toward spring, I expressed a desire to be baptized also.

Many persons, since that Sunday morning, have more than once told me of the beauty and impressiveness of my baptismal, and of the tear-filled eyes throughout the congregation as the minister prefaced the ceremony with a brief talk on my spiritual fitness for the obligations I

was assuming. I like to remember that it was one of the most godly men that ever lived,—Dr. O. E. Goddard,—who baptized me.

Throughout my early training, when moods of anger or despondency threatened to take possession of me, as they frequently did, Mother would remind me to go to the Bible, my altar, and kneel in prayer for spiritual aid. God, she told me, was watching over me and knew my every effort; and the silent communion with Him would bring peace to my mind, and strengthen my courage.

In time, upon encountering some new obstacle along my rocky pathway toward achievement, I would stop whatever I was doing, and of my own accord, announce my intention to go and pray.

CHAPTER IX

The Never-ending Words — More Weary Tasks

Shortly after our return to Muskogee in the autumn, Mother had begun to lay more stress on speech and its related subject, lip-reading. I was unresponsive, yes irritable, over this more intensive and extensive study, but she knew that if speech were ever to become my medium for expression, the matter had to be pushed ahead as fast as possible, regardless of whether I liked it or not.

So, day after day, countless repetitions of vowels and consonants and their blendings, and the corrections necessary to improve these principles, went on. And, day after day, hundreds of times, words and simple sentences as I learned them, were given to me for lip-reading practice.

But I could see nothing in the daily grind of these technical speech lessons, no matter how often Mother tried to inspire me with a desire for achievement, or showed me the value of speech as a means of communication, or used Mildred's alertness and eagerness to learn as an example to be emulated. This task of learning to talk, it seemed to me, would be a never-ending one; and, with the realization that I would have to restudy for speech and lip-reading, every word I had ever written,

In the year she became discouraged over the task of learning to talk.

The little sister, Mildred.

I lost what little courage I had gained, and wanted to die.

Mother buoyed up my spirits in various ways, one of which appealed to me more than all others. This was the promise of further travel. She told me of a place called Niagara Falls, showed me a picture of it, and hinted that we might go there sometime, if I would be more patient with the speech lessons and manifest more aptitude generally.

Soon I learned of other interesting places which we would see perhaps,—Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain, Lake George, Hudson River,—and for a week or so our language work was confined almost wholly to the writing of sentences about these points, Mother leading me gradually into the beauties and wonders of each, along this imaginary trip.

New York City was then added to our studies, and Mother intimated that from here she would take me again to Mount Vernon, should we ever make the trip she was telling me about. "But," she said, "your speech progress then must be such that the friends you made in Washington will be astonished." And she immediately acted out the surprise and pleasure they would evince at my replies to their greetings.

Another interest which she brought into the speech work was that of teaching me simple but unusual words, consistent with my speech development, with which Mildred was not familiar, and by coaching me to say them at

mealtime as a surprise to her. Mother would thereupon convey to me the thought, "Why, you know something that Mildred does not know; you are getting wise, soon you will be wonderful!" These two words, wise and wonderful, were used countless times each day throughout my training to spur me on, that I might feel the joy of conquest and become ambitious for success.

Despite the close attention to Mother's lips which the speech lessons necessitated, and the study of my own in the mirror, to say nothing of the special practice daily in lip-reading, I still had to be prompted into watching the lips of other members of the family for a bit of speech which might be uttered for my benefit. And it was a long time before I ever read a word on the lips of any one outside the lesson periods, without first being directed to raise my head and focus my eyes on the speaker's lips.

I remember the instance of my first initiative in lip-reading, which incidentally brought me the realization of the full meaning of hearing.

Mildred and I were alone together, when I happened to see her lips as they formed the word "mama." Her attitude was such that I knew the word had not been said for the practice of lip-reading which she often put me through (for she had long been imitating, in her childish way, many of Mother's endeavors for me). It was evident that she had spoken to Mother; but why, when Mother was not in our presence? I looked at her

questioningly, and she repeated the word. At this call, Mother came into the room.

Mother then stepped into the adjoining room again, and had Mildred urge me to call "Mama!" When Mother reappeared I was so pleased over the discovery that hearing persons can converse when out of each other's sight, and that my voice, too, could be heard in this manner, that frequently thereafter I would call from room to room, just to see her come to me. Then I found that I could make Mother hear me from the top of the stairs; and it gave me much satisfaction to see her respond to my call from this greater distance.

One afternoon a visitor, witnessing this little game of "call and come," asked Mother why she wore herself out rushing to me, instead of making me come to her. Mother explained that she was merely allowing me to put into practice a lesson I had learned, and that to curb such efforts would not be consistent with her plan of encouraging self-expression in me.

As my speaking vocabulary grew there were, of course, more words for the lip-reading practice; and there were times, during the dictation-periods, when it seemed that every article about the house that I could carry, lay upon the table, chairs, and floor of the study-room.

"Bring me a spoon—a teaspoon—a small spoon; a large spoon—a tablespoon—a soup-spoon; a pillow; a brush; the broom," etc., were some of the directions I followed day after day from Mother's lips until more

difficult words had been technically studied in the speech lessons, and were ready for the lip-reading practice.

In order that no guess-work would enter into this activity, and that a sense of humor might be awakened in me, Mother would often direct me to do strange things in connection with the articles which I had brought to the study-room in the lip-reading drill.

For instance she might say, "Put your foot into the basket; put the pillow on your head; put the tray under the rug," repeating each command with different prepositions and verbs, which exercise gave me a good review on these parts of speech and their meanings, as well as the nouns I was learning to lip-read.

As there was yet altogether too much laxity in my posture, whether sitting, standing, or walking, Mother instituted a brisk "left-right" stepping movement into the studies, which we practiced together at intervals throughout the day.

"Shoulders up, head high, mouth closed, breathe deeply," were the orders as we moved from room to room, or to and fro on the porch, Mother bringing me into step with her by the pressure of her hand when I began to lag behind or drag my feet.

She discovered that this exercise could also be used to give me the feeling of syllabic blendings. No matter how quickly she had had me combine the divisions of a word after the technical vowel and consonant study of each, there remained a break between them. To elimi-

nate this unnatural pause, she had me say a word over and over as I marched, giving a syllable to each step, and so connecting the repetitions of the syllables that they would synchronize with the perfect pace which she set for me.

Later, the two-syllable words which I had practiced in this manner were combined into groups of three or four each, such as "MamaPapaChesterMildred," and used in the march, as an influence in establishing perfect word-connection in my sentence utterances.

For some time, a good part of my evenings had been given over to lessons in reading. Mother used the simplest child-rhymes and stories, demonstrating the new words or explaining them by means of easy definitions.

The dictionary, at this stage of my development, was of no use to me; for the meaning of a word as given always contained words with which I was as unfamiliar as the one I was learning to define. So Mother would glance over a paragraph, select the words she had not already taught me, and list them in a column in my tablet, with definitions of her own making opposite them. When she came across one which could not be made clear to me through writing, sketching, or acting, she would search for a picture to throw light upon it.

The field of commonplace words,—names of things with which I came in contact daily,—had not yet been covered; I was still learning new ones by writing, and reviewing the old ones in the same manner, lest I forget

them before we were ready to incorporate them in the speech lessons.

One day, in testing my memory of a previous lesson on such parts of the body as "shoulder," "elbow," "wrist," and "hand," Mother touched my fingers with her pencil, indicating that I should list this name along with the others I had just written. When I failed to do this, she thought that I was puzzled by the spelling, or else had forgotten the word entirely; and, to refresh my memory, she turned the leaves of my tablet back to the original lesson pertaining to the body. But she did not find the word in her list or anywhere in my copies. She sat back and laughed; for it was, indeed, ludicrous that in teaching me these names of my body, she had overlooked the part, the fingers, with which I had "talked" in those other days.

But the greatest surprise of all came with the study of "brother" and "uncle," in connection with other terms of family relationship. After I had written the sentences, "Chester is my brother," "I love my brother," Mother told me to write another, using the word "brother" in like manner with "Papa," instead of "Chester."

After considerable hesitation, I wrote "Has Papa—brother?" Mother could hardly believe that I did not know that the uncle with whom I had lived was my father's brother. She then put down the sentence "Uncle Louis is Papa's brother." It was now my turn to show

surprise, and I hurriedly and brokenly wrote that I had thought "Uncle" a man's real name, just like "Chester."

How often in those days of study did Mother and I have occasion to laugh together over similar incidents!

CHAPTER X

Mildred—A Sister's Influence

THERE is no better way to normalize a deaf child than through constant association with a young, alert, hearing child, provided this companion possesses an abundance of love, and interest in the other's behalf.

These qualities, together with boundless patience, a strong sense of responsibility, and an unusual capacity for learning and remembering, made Mildred a great force in my training.

During the first year before my coming home to live, when Mother had had Mildred alone with her, she had adopted the plan of reading poetry to her for hours each day. This, with a view to driving out the destructive forces which had dominated Mildred's mind during the life with the indulgent grandmother, where there had been no beauty, rhythm, or music, and guiding her rare nervous energies into constructive channels.

Hence, at this time,—at the age of six,—Mildred was reciting, and had been for more than a year, page after page from "Hiawatha" and "Evangeline," besides numerous lengthy child-poems, having absorbed the lines, during her play, from Mother's repetitions of them as she sewed or moved about in the performance of other home

duties. And, due to natural aptitude and the favorable atmosphere in which Mildred was now living, she had become equally remarkable in other forms of mental development, which made her years ahead of me in knowledge.

Then, too, stored away in her little mind was everything that she had heard Mother teaching me, and frequently she would take it upon herself, when Mother was not about, to review some exercise with me, using the same methods which Mother had employed, and often the same language.

For example, she would stand me in the center of a room, just as had been done in my lesson on the points of the compass, and direct me to go to the North, to the South, to the East, and to the West (the sides of the room), or to the N. E., S. W., etc. (the corners); or require me to hold up my right hand, then my left; to step to the right, or to the left; and to locate objects in the room on either side of me, by the use of these terms "right" and "left," admonishing me from time to time to think hard,—that Mother had told me the answers many, many times.

Mildred's enthusiasm often carried her beyond the bounds of the lessons Mother had given me, and she would attempt to impart something from her own mental storehouse as well.

One day, after I had responded satisfactorily in the simple geography review of "Where does the sun rise—

where does the sun set?" she put to me the question "What is the horizon?" Over and over again, preparatory to giving me the answer, she repeated the new word for me, calling my attention to the formation of her lips as she voiced each syllable, then endeavoring to get me to imitate her.

As I was unable at this time to read a word on one's lips without having previously studied its technique, my efforts were purely guess-work. But Mildred persisted; and she was still battling with her self-undertaken problem when Mother came to her rescue and worked out the lesson for her.

How little I realized the extent to which Mildred's efforts were aiding me in my development! I took everything for granted, and gave unwillingly of myself even in the curling of her hair, despite Mother's frequent reminders that this act was a small return for all that she was doing for me.

As a rule, Mildred's patience with me enabled her to sit through the hair-curling ordeal without a word of complaint. But one afternoon, when I was feeling especially imposed upon because Mother had asked me to comb Mildred's hair again, and I was pulling it and jerking her head about more than usual, she beseeched me to be careful, at which I threw down the brush and pronounced the job "Much trouble." My utterance brought Mother quickly into the room; and the lecture which she set down for me in my tablet and made me study was

such as to make me perform my little task thenceforth with agreeableness.

From the beginning of that autumn, Mildred had gone with me for a short walk each morning, guiding me safely across the street and reminding me of my laxity when I fell into the habit of dragging my feet, or let my mouth hang open. On such outings, we often stopped to see some of our neighbors, and Mildred would prompt me to say my stock phrases pertaining to some incident of the home or the Washington trip. Occasionally after our leave-taking, these friends would telephone Mother and proclaim the wonder of my progress, expressing delight that my speech was becoming intelligible to them.

Through Mildred's watchful care of me when we were together, danger was often averted. One evening my father persuaded Mother to leave me at home, while he took her out for a bit of diversion. I was to sit by the library table with my embroidery, and Mildred to amuse herself with her dolls or picture-books until eight o'clock, when my brother was to come downstairs from his studies and remind her of the bedtime.

Everything would have worked out just right had not Chester, boy-like, burst into the room like a young cyclone, staging his entrance so as to inspire me with haste in following him upstairs. "Time to go to bed—time to go to bed," he directed, punctuating his words with attitudes of mock severity.

Mildred accepted his actions in the spirit of fun, as he

had intended, but to me they meant stern demands. I had always been allowed to remain up long enough past the bedtime to finish whatever part of a design I had happened to be embroidering, and then to tarry for a few moments to admire the evening's work and study its imperfections with a view to improvement; and to have to start to bed in such a hurry, upset me completely.

I had never lighted a gas stove, and had been forbidden even to go near one after an experience of the winter before, when I had spread my wet apron over one to dry, thereby nearly causing a conflagration. But I rushed to my room, opened the stove door, sat down on the floor in front of it, turned on the gas full force, and endeavored to light it so that I could finish my embroidery. That I did not meet with a serious accident was due to Mildred's timely interference.

Mildred and I, throughout those trying years of my early training, enjoyed a companionship unique for the absence of misunderstandings between us,—a record all the more remarkable by reason of her nervous temperament, and her having to live in close contact with an abnormal child.

Only once, and then at the age of five before she had had a chance to grow into wholly constructive habits, did Mildred ever try to take an unfair advantage of me. Even this incident, when she attempted to make it appear that I, rather than herself, had cut up Mother's late magazine, had its value; for, when the situation was made

clear to me, and I realized her affront, I exercised my first spirit of self-defense in my denial of the charge.

Not long ago a young man,—a friend of ours who had happened to call in my absence,—asked Mother if Mildred and I ever "scrapped."

She answered that we did not, and the conversation turned to other topics.

But presently he reverted to the subject and said, "Did I understand you to say that the girls never 'scrap'?"

Again Mother assured him that we did not,—that our relations were entirely free from quarrels of any kind.

"How do you account for it?" he exclaimed.

Then she told him that the unselfish love existing between us, and our deep interest in each other's affairs, precluded such disturbances.

"Even so," he finished, "I can hardly imagine such an ideal condition between sisters, especially where their dispositions are so vastly different as Helen's and Mildred's."

CHAPTER XI

I Am a Child Again

ALTHOUGH I was now almost fifteen years old, at the age when most girls have ceased to play with younger children, and are seeking more dignified and womanly pleasures, I was a little girl again, just learning the delights of play, and having my first real childhood.

In the late afternoon, when Mildred's little friends of the neighborhood gathered on our lawn to play, I too was there, not unwanted, but accepted as one of them.

The fact that Mother played with us kept me from feeling out of place with children so much smaller and younger than myself, and removed any restraint or embarrassment that they might have felt in the unusual association with a deaf girl. Never by word or action, either to these playmates or their parents, did she allude to my deafness as a handicap, or try to excite sympathy on account of it.

Mother frequently introduced a new game into the play-hour; but beforehand, she always rehearsed it with me, thus making it possible for me to show more alertness, which, of course, made me more natural in the eyes of the children, and encouraged a liking for me.

Among those who often came to play was a boy of

Mildred's age, and his sister. The two would bring their old broomsticks and race about astride them. Mother did not allow Mildred or me to "play horse" in this fashion; but he was determined to get us into the game somehow despite this. One afternoon Mother found him greatly agitated over his inability to make me understand that since I could not be a "horse," I would have to trot along behind his sister as her "colt,"—that Mildred was to be his. When Mother enlightened me as to the meaning of this part which he wished me to play, I thought it all very funny; and it proved quite a game, after having been enlarged and improved to suit our convenience.

Another little playfellow of Mildred's occasionally came to our house alone to spend an afternoon with her. His mother, one of the dear neighbors, had never told him that I was deaf, preferring to have him regard me as normal. He would talk to me while I sat studying or embroidering, then wonder why I did not stop my work to look at him.

Mother told him that I concentrated so completely on what I was doing, and became so absorbed in beautiful thoughts, that he would have to touch me before calling my name. He never forgot what she told him; and I recall with distinctness his eager face when, always thereafter, he gently patted me on my knee to attract my attention.

There were many simple things, other than play,

which the hearing child does by nature, but which I had to get through instruction.

Who would ever think I had to learn to kiss? Of course I practiced this form of expression when bidding members of the family good-night; but the action bore little resemblance to the kiss of the hearing child, for it was devoid of the pursing of lips and any sound whatever. It was nothing more than a lifeless contact of lips with cheek. Much fun entered into our study of this feature, and I was supremely happy when the time came that I could return Mildred's "smack" with an equally forceful kiss.

Another minor accomplishment, which I acquired about this time, was that of imitating the sounds made by certain fowls and animals.

Just before Christmas, Mother took me down to the chicken-yard, where a pompous gobbler was strutting back and forth, blissfully unconscious of his approaching doom; and as we watched him, she taught me to say "gobble—gobble." Then we turned our attention to the chickens, and later to the cat and the dog. When I could "caw-caw," "meow," and "bow-wow," I thought it a great feat.

For some time now, Mother had been trying to get me to take the initiative in the "good-afternoon" salutations to friends whom we chanced to meet on our daily walks near home, or down-town when we went to the picture-show or to shop. Though she had, by countless

reminders and much practice, succeeded in getting me to say "good-morning" first, and of my own volition, occasionally upon entering the breakfast-room, I simply would not use the "good-afternoon" greeting as she desired.

So she began to "stage" scenes in imitation of these meetings with our friends, and have me act them out with her. "This table," she would write and talk, "is Pegram's store, and I am Mrs. Hough coming around the corner. When we meet, you are to show surprise and say your 'good-afternoon' first, and not wait for me to speak, as you do her down-town."

Spontaneous oral expression, like speech itself, came to me slowly by reason of the twelve years of silence; but in the end, as with everything else that Mother undertook, it became quite as natural for me as for the hearing person.

CHAPTER XII

Deep Impressions

The continual listening to my faulty utterances, and the concentrated effort necessary to set up speech in a person of my age, together with the ever-present thought that some means must be found to raise my voice from its guttural placement to one of higher and more natural pitch, kept Mother's mind in a state of turmoil day and night.

She found herself analyzing the voices of others and allowing their imperfections to worry her. And the time came when even the most perfect speech irritated her to the extent that she longed to flee to the depths of some forest, where no sound of voice could reach her.

There had been no cessation in her work with me, or in her duties of the home since autumn; and now, at the end of the winter, she knew that she must drop everything at once and seek rest away from home for a time, if she were to avoid a nervous breakdown.

In thinking of leaving, she was confronted with the problem of what to do with Mildred and me. Father and Chester, she knew, could get along very well by themselves, but to expect them to care for Mildred and

me was unthinkable. Finally it was arranged that Mildred would be left with an old friend of Mother's in Southern Oklahoma. I, she told my father, was to go on with her to the sanitarium in Sherman, Texas, the place she had deemed best suited to her needs.

This thought of taking me with her met with opposition on every side. Father argued that it meant the carrying of her troubles with her; and, of course, in a measure he was right. But Mother reasoned that to leave me behind would increase her worries, instead of lessening them.

To guard against retrogression in a pupil is the aim of every conscientious teacher of the deaf; and Mother was not going to run the risk of losing what she had gained by having some person, through impatience with my speech efforts, or an unwillingness to take the time to write out a thought for my better understanding, cause me to lapse into the old sign-making habit. She felt that if I were with her, my progress, though at a standstill, at least would not be jeopardized.

I was delighted with Mother's decision regarding me, for it carried with it the pleasant prospect of travel.

She realized that having me with her at the sanitarium would make it difficult for her to get the complete rest from speech that she desired, inasmuch as she would want me to occupy the same room. Hence, one of the first things she did, upon our arrival there, was to have a screen so placed in front of her bed that she could

not see me from her corner, thus preventing any possibility of her talking to me and correcting my responses.

Another request which Mother made, was that all doors opening off our corridor be closed whenever I had occasion to pass them, lest I be made moody by the sight of so many persons ill in bed. Later, when she felt able, she taught me the word "sanitarium," and explained the good work of restoring health which was going on in other rooms besides her own. Therefore, I had only pleasant impressions of the place to carry away with me, when the time came for us to leave.

The fact that this was a Sisters' sanitarium made it all the more interesting to me. Each morning one of them would come for me and take me to the sun-parlor, where I would sit and watch the coming and going of nurses and sweet-faced Sisters in their spotless uniforms, or perchance, receive a smile from our own good Doctor Neathery. Then, after an hour or so, some one would go with me to the seat on the lawn near the entrance, and leave me there in the warm sunshine to busy myself with my needlework until noon.

But the happiest times for me were the evenings in the sun-parlor, when the nurses or Sisters paused to chat with one another from time to time and enjoy a bit of fun. They would often coax me into voicing some of the expressions Mother had told them I could say, then praise me for my efforts.

Sometimes they would question me as to the names of

things about me, and when I could not respond in speech or writing, they would jot down the words for me. One evening I amused them greatly by calling the sanitarium "hotel," then adding the sentence "I like it."

On Sunday I accompanied one of the Sisters to Benediction in the chapel in the building. The beauty of the service, unlike anything I had ever seen before, impressed me profoundly. My mind was so full of thoughts which I wished to impart to Mother, that the moment I was back in our room I hurried to her, forgetting for the first time my orders not to do anything that would cause her to talk. My speech at this time was inadequate for giving an account of what I had seen, and I stood there beside her bed, attempting to explain by gestures what my few words could not.

I wanted Mother to witness a service too, and I could hardly wait until she was sufficiently rested to go down to the chapel with me. When the time came, and I led the way, what a joy I felt in being able to lead her into something that I had discovered first!

In stepping off the elevator, I pushed her back, exclaiming, "I go first!" A stranger might have mistaken my enthusiasm for rudeness; but Mother by no word or action, dampened my spirits. She followed me down the aisle, and was obliged to pause while I observed the genuflection before entering the pew. I could not understand why she did not imitate me, or kneel when the others did as the service progressed.

The feeling that Mother must be made to kneel with me took full possession of me, and I jerked at her skirt and would have pulled it off, I really believe, had she not heeded my forceful persuasion. I was so delighted in finally getting her to do as I wished that I forgot her previous admonitions to be perfectly quiet in church, and laughed outright. I knew immediately that I had committed an offense, and was miserable throughout the remainder of the service, even though Mother held my hand in hers and patted me reassuringly from time to time.

Benediction over, she took me to the rear of the chapel, where Sister Superior was standing, and explained how my interest in the service had caused me to laugh, also offering an apology for herself, as she felt that, after all, she had been the real offender by not responding to my wishes sooner.

My peace of mind was restored when the Sister looked at me with great benevolence and told Mother that she had not known before that I could laugh, and that, instead of affecting her and the others as I had thought, my laugh had only made them happy.

That evening, as a further expression of her friendly attitude over the circumstance, the Sister brought me a little gold ornament with a picture of the Virgin upon it. As soon as the door had closed upon her, I found a ribbon for it and started to tie it around my neck. But Mother told me that the Sister had not expected me to wear the

gift,—that it was merely a token of her friendship, and interest in my spiritual development,—and that it would not be right for me to do so, as we were of the Methodist faith, and this was a symbol of the Catholic. So I wrapped up the pendant in a bit of tissue-paper and carried it home with me the next day as a keepsake.

Although this religious experience at the sanitarium never weakened my loyalty to my own church, I have since loved the Catholic service by reason of its appeal to the eye; and when in a large city, and time permits, I always go to one of the cathedrals.

CHAPTER XIII

My First Real Springtime

AGAIN Lady Spring was abroad in the Land of Oklahoma, and was scattering her smiles and caresses over city and country. Swiftly and silently she had advanced upon us; and in a day, it seemed, had turned winter's cold, dull landscape into one alive with warmth and color.

The prairie, gay with splashes of wildflowers, stretched away like an endless carpet, and the air was vibrant with the whir of wings and the joyous medley of bird-song. Meadowlarks sounded their clear, fife-like calls from almost every fence-post; and, in accompaniment, one could hear the rich, liquid song of the red-winged blackbird, the gurgling notes of the wooing cowbird, and the rattle and whistle of wings as the scissorstail and turtle dove added their offering to Nature's orchestra in this ovation to Springtime.

In the city, 'mid new-green leafage of lawn and park, flashes of blue and red told of the presence of bluebird and cardinal. Mockingbirds poured forth exultant melody from telephone pole and chimney-top, while the somber-coated catbirds strutted about, imitating the song of

their illustrious neighbor and relative, the king of songsters.

Seeds were bursting through the ground of our vegetable and flower beds; and, in their hutch near the garden spot, two pure-white rabbits were blinking their big, pink eyes, and nibbling lustily on the fresh clover I had plucked for them.

I often ask myself if there has ever lived another person with a springtime tucked away in his memory so full of surprises and knowledge-giving qualities as this one I was experiencing.

"Nature is wonderful!" now became my favorite expression, and I used it every time Mother pointed out some evidence of the earth's awakening.

"It is your springtime, too," she would say, "your blossoming into a new life."

Though no day had ever passed without Mother's enfolding me in her loving arms, and showering me with looks and words of praise over my development, my mind thus far had not wholly sensed the contrast of my present condition with that of two springs before.

But one evening, with the day's work over, as Mother, Mildred, and I sat on the lawn together, there came to me the thought of what it would have meant to go through life starved of the beautiful, and with fear the ruling power of my being, and Mildred, a brilliant woman, having to talk to me on her fingers. And so forcible was this sudden realization that I had verily

been brought from "darkness unto light," that I jumped to my feet exclaiming, "Now, I am free!"

A determination to work and achieve thereupon took possession of me, and I was filled with an earnest desire for better and fuller speech, and proficient lip-reading.

This trend of thought called into existence a feeling of bitterness over my retarded development, and prompted me to ask Mother why someone had not taught me when younger, as she was teaching Mildred.

"Why, the roses grew everywhere I lived before you came, but no one even told me that flowers have names," was the thought I conveyed to her in my outburst of emotion.

Mother soon dispelled these disturbing sentiments from my mind by telling me that she was very strong, and a teacher by nature,—that everybody had done all that was possible under the circumstances,—and that I should not dwell on the past, but live in the present, and think of the beautiful life that lay ahead of me.

One morning of this eventful springtime, I was awakened at the first faint sign of dawn by the soft brush of a rose against my cheek, and was surprised to see Mother at my bedside so early.

I was well enough acquainted with her ways by now to know that each variation in our routine meant some new discovery, some new joy. So, at her bidding, I hastened with my dressing, tip-toed down the stairs, and

followed her out into the quiet, dewy air without questioning.

The city park lay more than a mile across the town, and we were going there, Mother said, to watch the flowers open their petals to greet the sunshine.

What a rare treat it was to be abroad at this time of day when others were abed! I was so enthusiastic over the new experience that Mother found it necessary at times to quiet me, as we passed open windows of the cottages along our way, lest my sudden and unnatural utterance of such exclamations as "Wonderful!" and "Beautiful!" disturb the sleeping occupants of these homes.

We had driven to the park many times the year before, and Mildred and I had often wandered through it. But how different it looked to me now, with my mind awakened to beauty and knowledge!

Throughout that spring and early summer, Mother and I went again and again to the park at daybreak, until I knew the names of most of the flowers and shrubs that grew there. I would carry along my seed catalogues (our only guide at the beginning of this study), and search for pictures of the plants we were examining along some walk or drive, listing the names in my tablet as I found them. Frequently Father would surprise us by appearing at the park with the horse and carriage to take us home for breakfast.

Eight o'clock each morning found me out on the lawn, in the honeysuckle-arbor with Mother, reviewing the plant-names in my tablet, studying them also for speech, and learning to write simple descriptions of the flowers and shrubs I had seen.

Coincident with this study, I was becoming familiar with the birds we saw about our home. Bordering the lawn, there were eighteen tall maple trees, where the birds held jubilee from morning till night. Many a time, Mother and I would drop our work to follow some songster from tree to tree, so that I might see him at close range, and make mental note of his size, color, and markings for later identification.

In studying the birds of the country, we would start out,—Father, Mother, Mildred, and I,—every Sunday immediately after dinner, and jog along behind our old, easy-going horse, never returning until sundown. On these trips, we often spied transient visitors to Oklahoma,—birds that were stopping off long enough to fortify themselves with food and rest for the next lap of their journey northward.

I am glad that this springtime was in the day of the horse, for no automobile could ever have given me so great an advantage for studying the birds of the open.

That the rabbits, which had brought me so much pleasure throughout these many weeks, had been bought for any purpose other than pets, had never occurred to me. And how little I realized, as I fed them and petted them

each day, that they were to furnish me with one of the most beautiful lessons of my life!

There came a time when Mother followed me out to the pen, and told me that we must separate the rabbits. I remonstrated, thinking they would be lonely living apart; but she replied that I had only to look, and I would see that Mr. Rabbit was eating more than his share of the feed.

The next morning as I was taking the mother rabbit from her separate cage, to hold her and caress her as usual, Mother told me that I must not fondle this rabbit any more; and, in answer to my question as to why I should not, she gave me my first thought regarding reproduction of life. So beautiful seemed the story she was unfolding to me, that it was with a feeling of reverence that I returned the rabbit to the cage.

A few days later, I rushed into the house to Mother, and demanded that she come with me quickly, as the mother rabbit had lost all the fur from her breast. Mother immediately opened the scrap-book of clippings on rabbit culture which Uncle John had compiled for us, and said we would search for an explanation of this strange condition. Then, together, we read that prior to the arrival of the little bunnies, the mother rabbit always plucks the fur from her breast, and with it lines a nest for them.

I could only say, "Is it true—is it true!"

Mother replied that we would go and see.

She found the hole in a corner of the pen, and had me reach into it. When my hand came in contact with the soft, cozy nest, I gave a shout of joy.

Later, as I was led further into the story of life's beginning, and learned that not only this rabbit mother, but mothers everywhere, of every kind, prepare in some manner for the coming of their little ones, I exclaimed with such fervor as I had never expressed before, "Nature is wonderful!"

The baby rabbits came; and, by mid-winter, they had grown to maturity, mated, and were rearing families of their own.

Then, one day, as Mother and I stood by the garden-fence surveying the different homes of my little rabbit-village, I startled her with the vehement utterance "Why, before they were brothers and sisters—now, husbands and wives!" "Would Chester and Mildred marry?" I asked, in my eagerness for light on this puzzling situation.

Mother thereupon explained that the order of mating in the animal kingdom, as evidenced by my rabbits, does not exist in the human world.

It was at this time that Mother made me a cap of white fur, and trimmed my coat and muff to match. I wore them with delight until a friend playfully asked me if the fur was from my pets. This thought in connection with the rabbits, through which God's plan of propagation had been revealed to me, so affected me that for a

Experiencing the delights of natural childhood play.

The rabbit fur-trimmed outfit.

"Sweet Sixteen."

long time I could not be persuaded to wear any piece of the outfit.

. . . . . .

But the account of my rabbits has carried me way beyond the springtime, and I must return to the autumn which followed it.

My studies had moved on uninterrupted throughout the summer months, and now September found Mother and me alone the greater part of the day, for Chester had left for an Eastern college, and Mildred had entered public school.

CHAPTER XIV

Strides in Lip-reading And Other Forms of Development

Due to the intensive drilling each day of speech technique, and the reading of speech on Mother's lips, and on my own in the mirror, lip-reading was becoming a comparatively easy subject for me, and one more in the nature of a pleasure than a task.

Mother had observed, however, that I failed entirely in reading the lips beyond close range, or from any angle other than the full front view. So, in our practice, she began increasing the distance between us and drilling me on reading speech from the profile, as well as working for more proficiency when talking face to face.

The misconceived idea among so many that lip-movements have to be exaggerated when speaking to a deaf person, proved a great handicap to my success in reading the lips of strangers.

Mother's conversation to me at all times, during the lesson periods or outside them, was as natural as that which she directed to Mildred or any one else. This was the real reason for my being able to get from her what I could not get from others, and not merely because

I was used to her lips, as many seemed to think. Often some word or sentence which I could easily understand as Mother said it, became so prolonged on the lips of outsiders, by reason of undue mouth action, that all thought-continuity was lost to me in the distorted, unreadable jumble of vowels and consonants.

In order that I might not be embarrassed by being stared at in stores, picture-shows, and other places where the strangeness of my voice would be unusually noticeable, Mother had taught me to whisper, and was having me express my thoughts to her through this medium when in public, until she could find some means by which to improve my speech sounds. I did not then know the reason why she did this; I thought she was merely furthering my interest in the new manner of communication.

What delight I took in showing off my ability along this line! At mealtime, I would surround a whispered message to Mother with great mystery, glorying in my power to excite Mildred's curiosity.

Mother was now teaching me the names of the commonplace things which I had not yet covered, directly from her lips, instead of through the medium of writing.

I remember the evening she took me out in front, where the horse was tied, and pronounced the names of the most important details of the harness and carriage for me to lip-read, and how interested I was in getting information in this way. I could not, of course, read accurately all the vowels and consonants within these

strange words at the first utterance, or even the second; but with her many repetitions of the sounds I had misread, I finally succeeded in repeating the words after her correctly.

At this time Mother scarcely used the tablet in our walks. Whenever I failed to read a word or a thought on her lips in its entirety, she would stop to give me the technique in detail, no matter where we happened to be. On this account, she often missed seeing acquaintances whom we met or passed.

Once a woman, who was unfamiliar with our ways of study, told a good friend and neighbor of ours that Mother might be an unusual woman, but she certainly did not recognize persons when she saw them.

Our friend replied, "I suggest that you call upon me some afternoon about the time Helen and her mother are out for their daily walk, and that you watch them from the time they come in sight until they pass from view. When you see the numerous times Mrs. Heckman stops and becomes engrossed in imparting knowledge, you will realize that she is not out on a pleasure jaunt, but solely for the benefit of her pupil."

An amusing incident of another person who had a mistaken idea of Mother regarding me, occurred during my first year at home, when we were spending so much time on the lawn in the study of nouns and verbs.

This woman had just moved into a house nearly opposite ours. She did not know us, nor we her. At an

afternoon tea in the neighborhood which she attended, she told the hostess that, day after day since taking up her residence on Fourteenth Street, she had sat behind her lace curtains and watched the actions of "that woman across the way"; and how she had found outlet to her emotions by writing to her daughter, who lived in the North.

"Why!" she exclaimed, "that woman will be sitting perfectly still, then jump up all of a sudden, break a branch from the tree, and stand before the girl pulling off the leaves, waving and shaking the twigs in the air, bending and breaking them, and carrying on like a crazy person. I wrote my daughter, Emma, that I had never in all my life seen anything like it."

Several of the neighbors, who were well acquainted with Mother and her methods of teaching me, overheard this conversation with the hostess, and joined her in a hearty laugh. The woman was astounded upon learning my condition, and that Mother was using the branches, leaves, etc., to teach me their names, and to demonstrate such verbs as "pull," "break," "bend," "shake," and "wave."

When incidents of this nature were presented to me, they not only served to encourage my sense of humor, but also brought new words and phrases to my vocabulary and furnished me with excellent material for interesting stories in my language work.

Many were the schemes for my improvement which

Mother brought into the daily studies. The preceding summer she had given me the brood of chickens that had hatched out in the spring, and had me call them by the geographical names which were so difficult for me to say at that time, in order that I would have occasion to make frequent and incidental use of these much-disliked words.

"California," a pure-white pullet, was indeed a great pet, with "Africa," a coal-black one, next in favor. I could lay the former down on the ground, and by waving a stick rhythmically over her for a few moments, could put her so soundly to sleep that I could walk around the house and find her still lying there upon my return, waiting for me to wake her up. I often wonder what strangers thought of the odd picture which I presented as I sat embroidering on the porch of a late afternoon, with "California" perched on the arm of my chair, as contented as though she were on the roost in the chicken-house.

Since Mildred had started to school in the autumn, it had been my custom to accompany her each morning as far as the first street crossing, returning home alone; and then to meet her at the same corner at noon and four o'clock.

I liked these little walks by myself, and the feeling of independence which they gave me, but chose to pursue them in a strictly leisure manner, refusing to keep up with Mildred, and sauntering along when by myself.

And, whenever she insisted that I increase my speed so that it would accord with hers, I would become provoked and later complain to Mother about my having to walk so fast.

But Mother informed me that Mildred had been instructed to bring me into the more lively walk, for the stimulating effect it would have upon me. Noticing no change in my attitude, Mother began putting me through my marching exercise each time before I set out, and walking with me to the corner occasionally.

As I gained briskness in my walking and sufficient caution to be allowed to cross the street by myself, I accompanied Mildred farther and farther, until eventually I would go with her all the way to the school-building each morning and afternoon. How proud I was in returning home alone and making the eight crossings on the way!

Directly in front of our house was a boulevard-park, where Mother and I had sat on clear, starlit nights during that summer and early autumn of 1913, marveling at the beauty and immensity of the heavens, and studying the planets and the constellations.

How wonderful it was to take thoughts from Mother's lips in the moonlight; to learn to locate the North Star, the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter; and to talk of the moon and the Milky Way.

This form of study appealed to me to such an extent that Mother felt in need of some illustrated book for

children on astronomy. To her great delight, an agent with a set of books called "Our Wonder World," appeared one morning at the door. She knew at once that here was just the thing for our work, for the volumes were highly illustrated and covered a multitude of subjects, each of which was written in a clear, concise, and interesting style. There was matter on the earth, mankind, marine life, child-poems, fairy tales, zoölogy, botany, etc., as well as astronomy, to aid me in my development.

So, as time passed, I grew to know more and more about the heavens, and some months later we turned our attention to the clouds and air.

One day our lesson, taken from one of these volumes, was on the subject of air as a great water-drinker. I was particularly impressed with the statement that if one placed a little water in a plate and set it out in the open, the air would in time absorb the water. We would make the test ourselves, Mother said, on some clear day.

But that afternoon, unbeknown to her, I filled a saucer, put it on the porch, and kept running out every few minutes to see if the water had disappeared. Finally I became disgusted and told Mother of my experiment, exclaiming that the book was no good,—that the air would not drink up the water.

Nevertheless, I persisted in my trips to the porch; and soon, to my great joy, I found the saucer empty. I did

not know until long afterward that Mother had slipped around the house and poured out the water, in order that my faith in Nature and interest in the book might not be shattered.

CHAPTER XV

A New Science—The Key to Natural Expression in Speech and Music for Me

For almost a year now, Mother had been wrestling with her problem of how to make my utterances more human-like.

I spoke in the usual monotone of the deaf who are taught to talk. In fact, I was at the point in speech where progress ends with the deaf pupil because of his inability to acquire, through hearing, the principles governing natural speech.

It grieved Mother to have me embarrassed by the sudden turn of a stranger when I made an utterance in public, or to see a startled look on the face of a child who did not know me. Moreover, she had felt all along that unless she could discover a means by which to make my speech more like that of the hearing person, she would be a failure in the work she had undertaken.

Vowels and consonants alone, no matter how correctly formed, do not make natural speech; nor do their mere blendings, any more than steps, in themselves, make artistic dancing, or notes, though properly executed, music.

It is good voice-placement, intricate shadings (inflection), the stress laid upon syllables and words (accent and emphasis), and the flow of sounds (rhythm), that makes speech pleasing and musical.

Nights, during that autumn of 1913, after I had gone to bed, Mother would sit thinking and studying over the problem which my speech presented, with my frightful-sounding "good-night" running through her mind.

She reasoned that since I could not hear the requisites to good speech, I must somehow be brought to sense them. Finally, the thought came to her that possibly the essential qualities she so desired might be made a mental feeling, through the use of the body, in some such a manner as the blending of syllables had been effected by the marching exercise the year before.

To test the merits of her new idea, she stood me in front of a chair, and directed me to say "good-night," forcing my body into a sitting posture simultaneously with my utterance of the second syllable. She was hoping that the lowering sensation I was thus experiencing would bring to my voice some slight indication of the change of pitch she was working for.

For days, at intervals, she persisted in this practice until she was rewarded with a decided drop in my voice on the syllable "night," as I sank into the chair.

Having secured a falling inflection, Mother knew immediately that she had only to raise my body from a

standing posture onto my toes, to give me the rising inflection.

One may wonder why the rising inflection was not worked out first, inasmuch as my voice was already so low-placed that a falling inflection would send it almost into inaudibility.

Something in the nature of a jolt was needed to get the first feeling of vocal change into my consciousness; and this sensation could not have been given me by bringing the body upward, as it is impossible to raise the body with the same degree of force that one can lower it.

Again, one may question why the rising inflection was not introduced by a direct transition of the body from its sitting posture (the period) to the standing, following the lessons on the falling quality.

To have proceeded from the relaxed position I had assumed for the period, would have caused me to start the word, under study for the rising inflection, on the same tone level (if it might be called a tone) that I had descended to, in producing the falling quality.

Before I could derive the full benefit of Mother's discovery, which was to bring to my speech the rising and falling inflections, it was necessary for her to give me a basic tone of higher and more natural pitch, from which the fluctuations of my voice in speech could emanate; and then to so fix this foundational tone in my mind that I could start from it, and return to it when occasion

demanded, as hearing persons unconsciously do when speaking.

She decided to work for Middle C as this standard pitch, as a provision against my failing to accurately regain it after falling inflections had taken place in my utterances. She knew that even though I returned only to B or B flat, in completing an expression, my voice would still be within the range of natural placement.

In establishing the key-tone, Mother placed me directly in front of the stairsteps, with her hands pressed firmly against my back and diaphragm, and had me move with promptness to the first step, holding my body there at a perfect standstill as I uttered "do."

Of course my first efforts, in this practice for higher pitch, were far below Middle C, and Mother would show me that the sounds I had made corresponded with the basement, and were not even up to the main floor.

In time, with work at intervals throughout the day, my voice so responded to the bodily action of stepping into the "do" (the first step of the stairs), that I could strike the tone almost correctly. At this stage, when I fell a little short of Middle C, or slightly overreached it, Mother would show me my error by designating relative points below or above the first step, or "do," thus giving me a mental picture of the tone I had uttered.

During the working out of the basic tone, Middle C, many unexpected complications entered into the practice.

For instance, after starting the "do" true to pitch, I would let my efforts so relax on the vowel that the sound would subside into the former subnormal pitch, and diminish until it became a mere breath. Bringing me into the "do-step" again, Mother would remove her hand from my back and cause my body to sway backward, at the same time likening this downward movement to the diminishing cadence in my voice. To show me that a sustained tone was desired rather than this slur, she would bring me back into an upright position and have me repeat the action from floor to step, holding my body firmly as I said "do."

The time came when Mother could correct my low-pitched utterances without having to take me to the stairs. She would simply place her hands at my sides and draw me upward as though she were going to lift me, thus calling up in my mind the feeling I had experienced on the stairs when voicing the "do."

Soon after Mother originated these methods for giving me the rising and falling cadences, she began having me walk out simple declarative and interrogative sentences to the rhythmical pace which she set for me. At her direction, I would rise on my toes, dip, or relax into a sitting posture in a chair, in accordance with the inflections which the sentences demanded.

Already, in four different ways, I had studied every word that I had learned,—first by writing, then for speech and lip-reading, and lastly for inflection.

Now began the fifth round of these words, for accent and emphasis.

In making these speech qualities a mental feeling, Mother used the same means,—the body,—by which she had established the inflections in my consciousness, but employed it in a different manner. She would give my arm a light or strong pressure, corresponding to the stress needed for the word or syllable under study. At first she confined this phase to such two-syllable words as "papa," "repeat," etc., then would tap out whole sentences on my arm in order that I might get, through the skin perceptions, the various shades of accent and emphasis in word continuity.

Then came visions of music for me, for Mother was considering the question of giving me lessons on the piano.

She fully realized the problem which this study would present to a person who had never heard. The hearing child, in beginning music, can center his thoughts principally upon the action of his fingers, with the theoretical phase entering in the study more or less incidentally.

But Mother's practical mind told her that with me the various components of music,—notes and their values, time, mechanics of playing, and rhythm,—would have to be pursued as separate studies for a while, to avoid confusion, else I could not derive enough benefit from the work to warrant taking the time from the more essential studies of speech, lip-reading, history, geography, arithmetic, language, and the voice-placement exercises.

Hence, after deciding upon this new medium of expression for me, Mother began to teach me the technique of fingering, using the typewriter and the so-called Touch Method of typewriting, with which she was familiar, to introduce the complicated subject of music to me.

My first lesson was the practicing of "a" across the page, with a space between each letter. When I could write this exercise satisfactorily, with little thought of hand-position, and never at any time looking at the keyboard, Mother began guiding my left foot into tapping out the 2/4 time which the letter and space represented. I used the left foot in this counting for the reason that I would eventually need the right for pedalling at the piano.

Then followed the letter-combination "al" with its spacing, which practice gave me 3/4 time. After this had been perfected, I used other groups of letters for other kinds of musical time, until I had covered the three rows of letters on the machine, and was able to write words and short sentences and mark time with my foot, in unison with the beats which Mother patted on my shoulder, or made with her pencil in conducting.

Note-names and values were then learned from blackboard practice, and when I was ready for actual work at the piano, my mind was free to think almost wholly of rhythm, technique having become secondary to this feature and the application of notes.

Mother had already taught me the waltz, the two-step,

and simple æsthetic movements, and was having me practice them daily with her as an aid to rhythmical speech.

So, later, in my failure to properly put together the phrases of a piano study, she would take me on the floor and give me an impression of the correct rhythm by dancing out the measures with me, alternating this dancing with the playing until I could apply to the piano exercise something of the feeling I had gotten from the bodily movements. Occasionally, to further encourage a flow of tone, she would set me swaying in a pendulum-like motion as I sat practicing.

At the piano, as at the typewriter, I beat out the time with my foot. Had I voiced the counts, I could not have given the necessary thought to rhythm, as the process of talking yet required considerable concentration. Sitting on the floor, Mother would tap the beats onto my leg with one hand, while with the other she guided my left foot upward and downward, forcing it into continued action when I did not raise or lower it on time. This method of reaching my consciousness through the skin perceptions was employed with every piano study, until sufficient practice on it had enabled me to keep my foot going just right.

Thus did Mother's tenacity of purpose and rare inventive genius bring to my realm of silence the possibility for natural speech and artistic music.

CHAPTER XVI

The Joy of Speech Intercourse and Comradeship

The spring of 1914 brought me one of the happiest surprises of my life; for the uncle with whom I had formerly lived summers, and who had not seen me for over three years, came to Muskogee unexpectedly.

Until this time, none of my father's relatives had seen me since my new life and development had begun. Hence, my uncle's visit was an important event to me. I shall never forget the joy that shone on his face when I greeted him and called him by name; for he had never before heard me talk.

Mother and I happened to be spending the afternoon with friends on the day of my uncle's arrival, and had no idea of his being in the city until he appeared at the door to take us home. Mother thoughtfully suggested that he and I walk back together instead of riding with her, knowing that this plan would make it possible for me to appear to a better advantage before him, inasmuch as it would place upon me the responsibility of asking and answering questions regarding family interests.

When we reached home, and Mother met us at the

door, Uncle Louis could not find words enough to express his astonishment and delight over my speech and improvement in looks. Although Father and Mother had written him and Aunt Louise from time to time of my progress, he was not prepared, he said, to find such great changes in me.

His visit was over altogether too soon; and, in bidding me good-bye, he told me that all the people who had known me in Manito, as well as all my cousins and aunts and uncles in Pekin and Peoria, would know ere long that he had heard me talk, for he was going to spread the good news upon his return. But Aunt Louise, he was certain, would want to come and hear me herself, when he visited us again shortly.

These words of promise, so full of appreciation, sent my spirits soaring; and, throughout the spring and summer, when the speech lessons grew irksome, Mother had only to remind me that Aunt Louise was coming, for the work to move on with renewed zeal.

During my uncle's visit, he had bought Mildred and me each a pair of roller-skates; and, in an amazingly short time, it seemed to me, she was sailing up and down the walk with a speed and grace which I was hoping to attain.

My imperfect sense of balance prohibited my learning to skate without instruction as she had done, and it was necessary for this feature to be made a study. Mother's days were already so fully occupied with my

work that there was scarcely a moment left for herself. Nevertheless, she set aside two periods daily for the skating, as she knew that in addition to being a source of pleasure to me, this exercise would encourage deep breathing and strengthen my muscles generally.

As this was the greatest physical exertion I had yet encountered, the grunting sounds, which Mother had all along been endeavoring to eliminate, were intensified; and I had to be constantly reminded of the habit with a view to overcoming it.

Many were the months of struggle with those cumbersome foot-attachments, and many the times I would have been sent sprawling on the sidewalk, had it not been for Mother's guidance as she strode along beside me, or the accommodating privet hedge, which I learned to grasp at the right moment when I felt myself falling. I must have presented an unbeautiful picture as I went up and down the walk, with movements devoid of rhythm, trying my best to take on a little of the swing that characterized Mildred's skating.

But, despite the element of study which entered into the practice long after I was able to stand on my feet unassisted, and skate with some degree of assurance, I was very fond of this activity, and welcomed the times when I could get out my skates.

That year also brought me the joy of real comradeship with hearing girls of my own age.

There was Louanna, Lillian, Maude, Irene, Donna-

belle, Norma, and Catherine, in whose homes I was spending many a happy hour at social gatherings or for chummy visits, and who really found pleasure in having me with them.

Often, as I walked or rode with one or more of them, attended a picture-show, poured tea or danced at some party, or sat embroidering with a neighborhood group, my thoughts would turn to the time of my colonial dinner-party two years before, when I had looked upon these very girls as unwelcome strangers from another world.

I never think of these girlhood companions without wondering if they ever realized how much their friendship meant to me. Each, by some conspicuous trait, furnished an example for character study, thus contributing to my education as well as my happiness.

Donnabelle, for instance, was like a young colt,—all action; and, from her lively personality, I gained much vivacity. Norma was exactly the opposite, and a most admirable object-lesson for the study of charm.

And Catherine, the jolliest girl I have ever known, was always entertaining me with some prank, or choice bit from her witty mind. To her I owe much for the part she played in the development of my sense of humor. Many a time, when studying or embroidering, I have glanced up and seen her on her horse right outside the window by which I was sitting. How she would laugh when she saw on my face the look of surprise and merri-

ment which her unconventional manner of calling had evoked! Such antics always made me feel that I might sometime look up from my work and find her riding her horse up the steps and right through the front door.

All these girl friends are married now except Catherine, and she has continued to be my chum and fun-maker to this very day.

It was shortly after the World War that Catherine asked Mother if she might teach me some slang, saying that, in her opinion, no girl's education was complete without at least a rudimentary knowledge of it. She brought Mother a list of words and phrases,—page after page of slang expressions,—requesting her to select those which would be proper for me to learn. Mother, though, left the matter entirely to Catherine's discretion, telling her that her love for me was all the guide she needed.

There was one phrase in particular that Catherine drilled me on at every opportunity. My brother had grown a mustache while in the service; and, upon meeting him in New York City on the trip Mother and I were planning, I was to say, "No, thank you, I don't care for the tooth-brush rub," when he started to kiss me in greeting.

My joy in seeing him was so great, and the mustache so becoming, that I could not bring myself to use the expression Catherine had taught me. I shall never forget the playful lecture she gave me afterward for allowing sentiment to overrule my intentions.

CHAPTER XVII

Progress Through Mother's Invention

A YEAR had now elapsed since Mother originated for me the Bodily Movement and Bodily Pressure Methods, and my speech had begun to improve considerably from the daily application of these exercises. My utterances were less guttural and had more tone-color; they were therefore more intelligible and pleasing. Many were the compliments I was beginning to receive over this marked change in my voice.

At this stage, I could make the standard tone of "do" with perfect pitch at almost every attempt, so well had it been fixed in my consciousness. Having worked a year on this basic sound, need one wonder at our happiness over the accomplishment.

In our practice of the "do," or in the speech lessons, whenever I failed to keep my voice on the proper tone-level, Mother now had only to raise or lower her hand, for me to respond satisfactorily to this mental suggestion of the feeling I had experienced on the stairs when establishing the tone.

With a view to giving my speech a singing quality, and that I might develop more breath control for lengthy

sentences, Mother had lately been having me practice my "do" as does the hearing person whose voice is being trained for song.

In my case, her hand was the guide for correct pitch and length of the note. She would raise or lower the arm if my start was too low or too high, hold it perfectly still for sustained tone, and close her fingers suddenly when she wished me to stop. Extreme caution in the matter of tone-length was exercised, lest a vanishing cadence occur as a result of my trying to sing on a low supply of breath.

If, from lack of physical effort or mental application, I let my sound subside at the start of the "do," Mother would at once begin stretching my body upward at the waistline, as had been done for speech intonation, and I would bring my voice up and hold it until she gave me the signal to stop. How well I remember the times she even lifted me completely off my feet, in the beginning of this work, when I failed to manifest the necessary spirit of coöperation.

Mother had realized for months what it would mean to my speech if I were given a knowledge of more tones of the diatonic scale of C; so she proceeded to teach me "re," then "mi," using the Stairstep Method just as she had previously done for "do." With these perfected, the remaining intervals of the scale were added one by one, and practiced together with those already learned, until I could run the whole scale upward and downward, or

sound any other combination of notes within the octave with accuracy.

The countless hours of practice which we put on "do," "re," and "mi," gave me a firm foundation for the building of the other scale-tones; consequently, these were gained more quickly and easily. But it was four years from the time Mother began working on the foundational pitch of "do," that the difficult task of learning to sing with accuracy and expression within the range of the one-octave scale of C was accomplished. Even then, it was necessary for Mother to direct me at all times.

When introducing the first half-tone of the scale, Mother had me move to the third step, or "mi," as usual, then guided my body to the book which she had placed at the back of this same step for "fa." Thus I sensed that I must raise my voice only half as far for this interval as for the others I had learned.

From this point in the scale, she discontinued the use of the Stairstep Method almost entirely, and employed arm-movements, upward and downward in definite spacings, to give me the remaining four tones; for, so aided, I could imagine the lift of voice necessary between these notes, by recalling the emotions which the bodily movements on the stairs had enkindled in "do," "re," "mi," and "fa." Her arms hanging naturally at the sides, parallel with the body, indicated "low do," extended at shoulder level, "sol," and high above the head, "high do,"

with the other sounds thought of at intervals between these major arm-positions.

My work on the piano, too, was improving under the methods which Mother had originated and was employing.

I shall never forget my enthusiasm over the first little piece I learned to play; it was months later, of course, after I had spent more time on scales and simple exercises.

Mildred had been given this "Slumber Song" (by Gurlitt) by her piano teacher, and she had been playing it, together with other studies, for Father and Mother, and neighbors who happened in of an evening. It hurt me so to sit back and see the applause and praise she received at such times, that Mother told me she would teach me to play the lullaby, and we would keep it a secret until I could do it perfectly.

For weeks, while Mildred was at school, we worked on the piece each day, along with my piano exercises. Finally, Mother was satisfied with our efforts, and she promised me that I might play it as a surprise the first time any of our friends came in.

I had my opportunity shortly; and, on that evening, Mildred, at Mother's request, gave the "Slumber Song," during which time I waited expectantly for my turn to win applause. When Mildred had finished I arose; and, with the fresh copy of the music which Father had brought home to me that very day (I had worn out the first copy in practice), I marched to the piano and played

the piece from beginning to end, without an error or even a break in rhythm.

Mildred watched the performance with unbelieving eyes, and so did our friends, all of which pleased me greatly and made me feel like a conqueror receiving the laurel-crown.

CHAPTER XVIII

Another Journey

THREE years had elapsed since the visit to Washington,—three long years of steady application to my studies,—and now July found us at Niagara Falls, the first stop on the trip which Mother had promised me at the time I became so discouraged over the task of learning to talk.

When I stood at Prospect Point, gazing at the mighty cataract, with only the little railing between me and those rushing waters plunging into mist-enshrouded depths, emotions unlike any I had ever experienced surged through me, and held me to the spot as one spell-bound. Insignificant seemed the ideas I had formed of Niagara Falls, in the face of the immensity and marvelous beauty of the reality.

We spent two days at this wondrous place, viewing the Falls from all possible angles, traversing the woodland paths on Goat Island, and studying the lesser beauties with which Niagara so abounds.

At Lewiston we took the boat for Toronto, and I remember how impressed I was with the thought that these tranquil waters, over which we were gliding, had but scarcely left the turbulent falls and whirlpools of

Niagara. I felt strangely at peace as I sat on deck and watched the river widen until it lost itself in Lake Ontario.

The trip across the lake gave me an opportunity to review the geography and history of the region we had just passed through, and to learn the names of the different parts of the boat. While on the upper deck, during Mother's and my study-tour, my attention was called to an airship flying over the water in the direction of the American shore. As the small model that my brother had made when in high-school, and attempted to sail from the roof of the barn, was the nearest thing to a plane I had ever seen, the sight of a real one in actual flight aroused my interest considerably.

We had barely stepped off the boat at Toronto when I noticed that Mildred was strutting along beside me with the black elastic (whose purpose was to keep her hat in place) stretched across her chin, in imitation of the strap on the head-gear of the English officer she had observed. Today I can laugh at the picture she presented, and at my embarrassment and concern lest some one see her aping the customs of the people of our neighbor-country.

The carriage drives which we took through the pleasant streets of Toronto were delightful and instructive. The features of the city which appealed to me most were the imposing buildings comprising the Toronto University, the Ontario House of Parliament all covered with Eng-

lish Ivy, the Pellatt Castle with its some dozen chimneys, and the extreme courtesy of the citizens.

At the end of a two days' stay, we boarded the boat for Montreal, our next stop, and bade good-bye to my father and brother, who had accompanied us thus far.

Immediately after breakfast the next morning, Mother and I were on deck, studying our maps, tracing the course of the boat, and locating points we had passed in the night.

As Kingston came into view I was told something of the history of Fort Frontenac, then shown the grim, gray towers of the ancient stronghold. It hurt me to think of the long years of frontier warfare that once waged in this now peaceful site, and along the whole length of the St. Lawrence. But these unpleasant thoughts quickly left me, for our boat was beginning to wind in and out among the Thousand Islands.

Here I found that my imagination had again served me badly, as I had not conceived anything of the unique picturesqueness which justifies the fame of the archipelago.

Each isle had a charm all its own; and so different was one from another that I never grew weary of studying their characteristics throughout the several hours we were among them. The simple stories that Mother jotted down in my tablet from time to time, of the days when the Indians had fished and hunted in this land of plenty before the coming of the White Man, and her fanciful pictures of the part a certain spot might have played in

their activities, gave the islands a pleasing historical aspect in connection with their beauty.

At Prescott we changed from the lake steamer to the boat that plies the river between this point and Montreal, and soon the historic lighthouse and the first of the rapids were claiming my attention.

A friend of ours in Muskogee had told me of her trip down the St. Lawrence several years before, and how she had enjoyed the rapids even though there had been a slight accident to the boat in its course through the heaviest swells. Mildred had listened with sparkling eyes, for she delighted in anything that carried with it an element of danger.

Now, as we entered the Long Sault Rapids, she could hardly contain herself for joy, and Mother found it necessary to keep constant hold of her, lest she fall overboard in her excitement. I was content to sit perfectly still near the railing, quietly watching the tumultuous water ahead, and enjoying the bounding and rebounding of the boat as it made its way through the buffeting current. Thus, Mildred's actions seemed to me quite inappropriate.

The contrast in our conduct was so noticeable that a woman sitting near, a Mrs. Landis of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was prompted to comment upon it. After being told of my condition, and the efforts I was making to overcome it, many were the smiles of encouragement she gave me during the remainder of the trip to Montreal.

Toward evening of that day, as our boat left the rapids and slipped into the quiet waters of the harbor, Mrs. Landis gave me an affectionate pat on the shoulder in passing us on her way off, and remarked that we would probably meet again while in the city. We did; and from this chance acquaintanceship, there grew between us a warm friendship.

I never saw Mrs. Landis again after our ways parted at Montreal, but received letters from her regularly; for she followed my progress with more than usual interest from the time we met until several years later, when Death took from me one of the most sincere and appreciative friends I ever had.

Montreal fascinated me. I was up early the morning after our arrival to see what this "City of Churches" held for the traveler. I had noted the many spires rising above the tree-tops the day before, when from the boat I had studied the city, and I was anxious to enter the great cathedrals.

The vast interiors of Notre Dame Church and St. James' Cathedral, and the frescoes in the Jesuit Church impressed me profoundly. In Notre Dame, we climbed the steps of the tower to the top, where the great bell hung in silent majesty. I was interested to learn that this bell is one of the five largest in the world, and the largest in America, and that the chime of bells in the other tower is famous throughout that land.

With my liking for history ever growing, I found much

to hold my attention in the Château de Ramezay. We tarried so long in this quaint old mansion, looking at the relics therein treasured, that we must have belied the impression of haste left by those American tourists who seem satisfied with only a cursory glance at things, as they rush from one place to another.

How unusual was the cab which took us up Mount Royal, and how beautiful the drive along winding roads, through virgin timber, past the gorgeous flower gardens and the open slope where the winter sports are held!

Our driver was a native of Montreal, and there was no feature of the place with which he was not familiar. The interest we manifested in things along the way, and the studious nature of our conversation pertaining to them, caused him to regard us as passengers who would appreciate his wealth of eulogistic stories of the city and its history. He therefore talked incessantly, letting the horse take care of itself.

Of course, during the drive, Mother could not repeat to me in detail the information he gave her; but later, with the first opportunity, I was told many of the colorful stories in full.

The cabman was as generous with his time as with his knowledge, and voluntarily stopped the horse whenever we showed the least bit of enthusiasm, or when Mother wished to make me understand something about a certain spot before leaving it.

From the outlook on the summit, where we sat for more than an hour, talking and writing, I obtained a magnificent view of Montreal and its surroundings. Who would not apply herself joyfully to a lesson in geography, with this living map of enchanting beauty spread out before her.

Nestling below me was the city; and beyond, lay the long stretch of shimmering river, with the shadowy forms of the Adirondacks and the Green Mountains far in the distance. It was with a feeling akin to regret that I thought of the morrow, when we would board the train for Plattsburg and leave behind this interesting city and the beautiful river.

The sunset glow was fading into the twilight that next evening when we reached the head of Lake Champlain; and the moon was sending its glow over the peaceful waters when we went on the boat for the night. We were loth to shut ourselves off from this lovely scene, but we felt the necessity of seeking our berths at an early hour, as we were planning to be up for the sunrise.

And what a sunrise it was! It stands out in my memory as one without equal. From the first gleam of light, we watched the colors deepen and expand, until the sun itself peeped over the verdant mountains and bathed the landscape in golden light.

Before the boat was far under way, I had studied the geography of Lake Champlain and its bordering lands,

and was ready to lay aside my books and fully enjoy the beauties that lay ahead of me.

Nightfall found me in Albany, having added much to my storehouse of knowledge in history and geography by the trip down Lake Champlain and Lake George, and met two young women from Chicago, who were later to become my fast friends.

One of these new acquaintances, upon hearing me reply to a question from Mother, remarked, "Your daughter has taken quite a cold on the trip, hasn't she?" Great was her surprise when informed that the peculiar quality she had noticed in my voice was not due to a cold, but to the fact that I was learning to talk after twelve years of silence, and that the speech muscles, which had so long been inactive, were yet too weak to produce tones of normal character.

In Mother's close association and work with me, she had not realized the extent to which my speech had improved. Hence, this incident made her feel that we were not working in vain.

Our new-found friends had observed how tired Mother looked; and now, realizing the strain under which she was traveling, they took charge of Mildred for long periods at a time on the Hudson River, thus making it easier for Mother to instruct me on points of interest as we sailed along.

The Catskill Mountains, the Highlands, West Point, Fort Putnam, Tarrytown, the Palisades, in fact every-

thing we passed, held something for me and paved the way for broader study of the history and geography of this particular section later on. So graphically did Mother present the historical significance of these scenes, that the next winter, when I took up Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," it seemed that I had actually lived in the setting of the story.

In New York City, as in Albany, our hotel room connected with Miss Downey's and Miss Kennedy's. To these friends I am indebted for the jolly trip to Coney Island, for Mother never would have been equal to such an excursion, after piloting me through the Bronx, Aquarium, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other points of educational interest.

It was with keen pleasure that I viewed the sights of New York, and witnessed the Sunday morning service at St. Patrick's Cathedral with Miss Downey. But the ever-surging crowds on the streets, and the ceaseless roar of traffic, elevated railroad and subway, jarred every fiber of my being to a state of extreme irritability; and, despite the things I liked about the city, I was perfectly satisfied with the three days' stay.

Moreover, I was anxious to be in Washington again, where I was to renew the friendships made on the previous visit, and see, with a mind prepared to better understand, the places that had contributed so much to my earlier development.

Mr. and Mrs. James M. Beall, life-long friends of

Mother's, who had entertained us occasionally before, met us at the station; and so astounded were they over my speech as I greeted them, that Mother and I once more had cause to rejoice over the success of our work.

Although I gave over a portion of each day to certain studies,—among which was speech, of course,—during this stay in Washington, there was ample time for recreation. We took automobile rides into Maryland and Virginia for luncheons and dinners; spent several days on Chesapeake Bay, where I discovered the joy of salt-water bathing; and revisited Mount Vernon and Arlington, as well as most of the public buildings I had seen on the other trip.

Everywhere I went, old friends and new commented upon the pleasing quality of my voice.

Among the new friends I made was Mrs. Fred Dennett, wife of the ex-commissioner of the General Land Office, and whom Mother had formerly known while living in Washington. I was frequently invited to her home; and one evening a close friend of theirs remarked that to him my speech did not sound in the least like that of a deaf person, but rather resembled the utterances of a foreigner just mastering the English language.

Another time, when making a call with Mr. and Mrs. Beall upon friends of theirs at Chevy Chase, I was more than pleased with the impression which my speech made on a visitor in their home,—David Fairchild, eminent botanist, and son-in-law of Alexander Graham Bell. He

especially noticed my soft, modulated tones as I conversed, and was deeply interested in my training. Such appreciation, coming from a person active in the promotion of oral expression for the deaf, and well acquainted with speech-standards, was of great satisfaction to me.

I had a lovely drive to Mr. Fairchild's country home, "In The Woods," a most beautiful spot, and carried away with me a copy of his "Book of Monsters" in which he wrote, "To Helen Heckman, a souvenir of a day at our house in the woods of Maryland."

The journey from Washington homeward also had features worthy of mention. We spent several days with my relatives in Pekin, Manito, and Peoria, stopping in Chicago on the way, where we had the pleasure of again seeing our friends of the Hudson River trip, Miss Downey and Miss Kennedy, from whom we had separated when leaving New York City.

None of the relatives, excepting the uncle and aunt with whom I had made my home, had seen me since the year preceding my going to Muskogee to live. Therefore, they had never heard me talk, and my visit among them was an event to be discussed long afterward.

From Washington we had shipped a big box of printed matter which we had gathered on the trip, and it was home by the time we arrived. My father laughingly questioned its worth, considering the amount of express charges he had paid on it. But he changed his mind later, when he saw how every scenic post-card, railroad

folder, leaflet, and booklet that we had collected was brought into use in my detailed study of the history and geography of the regions we had toured in the summer.

What pride I took that winter in enumerating the places I had seen in my travels, and giving accounts of them to our neighbors and friends, whose interest in all that interested me never flagged.

CHAPTER XIX

I Profit by New Studies and New Experiences

The pleasures and benefits of the St. Lawrence River trip, and the visits in Washington and Illinois, had so stimulated my efforts that upon our return home, I was entering into every phase of my work with more enthusiasm than I had ever before displayed. Consequently, two new subjects were added to my schedule,—Spanish and shorthand.

Mother and Mildred had taken up the study of Spanish together. Now I, too, was to know the delights of exploring the new and beautiful language. I was to learn to read the descriptions of the pictures in the First Spanish Reader that I had so often gazed upon with a keen desire to know their meaning.

The practice of the liquid Spanish words was of great aid to me in my endeavors for clearer and smoother speech, and I pursued the study of the language with this purpose in mind, and not with the idea of becoming versed in it.

Neither did Mother teach me shorthand with a view to making me an expert. But as this subject is purely

phonetic, the knowledge I acquired of it proved of immense value to me in pronunciation and lip-reading, for it enabled me to think of words just as I should voice them or read them from the lips of others.

But so eager was I to attain proficiency in this new method of writing, that I would take advantage of every opportunity to practice the lessons Mother had given me. No matter how much speed I was able to acquire, though, in the making of characters and their phrasing, I was handicapped in taking dictation because I had to listen with my eyes, then stop to put on paper the thoughts I had read from Mother's lips. And, as I could not hold in my mind for transcription more than a sentence or two at a time, these breaks were necessarily many.

There came a day, however, when I could read shorthand through the sense of feeling to the extent that I could take down in longhand a simple story without stopping, by following the symbols which Mother slowly traced in my left hand with an orange-stick.

My imperfect breathing all along had made it impossible for me to talk at length and maintain, throughout the expression, the same good tonal quality I had started with; besides, my vocal cords tired easily due to their lack of normal strength. By now, I had so improved that when the Muskogee chapter of the P. E. O., of which organization Mother was a member, met at our home, I gave a reading for the first time. My recitation was only the nursery rhyme "Three Little Kittens," but

I doubt if Daniel Webster at the height of his oratorical power ever stirred an audience to more enthusiasm than I did mine that afternoon, with this initial effort at speech-making.

A few days after the recital of this child-poem which had given me so much pleasure, Mother began having me memorize and act out short and simple monologues. Two of these were "The Thin Dog," and "The Optimist" (by Marjorie Benton Cooke); and I remember the merriment I created when I gave them for our friends.

Mother had never missed an opportunity to have me observe unusual personalities, especially of an amusing nature, and my imitation of certain characters became a regular feature of the informal home-programs which she frequently arranged for Mildred and me.

Another form of expression in these little entertainments for the family or neighbors, was my reading of simple sentences from the lips of Mother's shadow on the wall. This "Shadow Method," which she had originated for skill in lip-reading, was an outgrowth of the practice of direct profile reading she had begun with me two years before.

The dramatic interpretations, which had entered into all my work from the very beginning, had developed in me quite an ability for pantomime. I was now ready, Mother felt, to take up the study in earnest with a view to broader and more artistic expression. So, to the training she was already giving me, she added many of the

Helen Heckman and her Mother-Teacher conversing by means of the "Shadow Method" of Lip-reading.

"I stand at the door of my sweetheart."

"I see a rival."

"I will fight him."

(*In the costume of Orlando, 1916*)

lessons from the Delsarte System of Expression, which dealt largely with æsthetic gymnastics preparatory to true pantomime. With the inflections established in my speech, I was able to practice all the exercises for the voice included in this study of Delsarte.

Despite the well-regulated diet and exercise which had been set up for me, I had not yet acquired the slenderness and litheness of body that Mother was striving for. Therefore, she worked out a series of exercises which she thought would be effective in bringing about the desired change.

In one, I was directed to walk gracefully to the piano and, with unbended knees, and no break in the rhythm, touch the keyboard with my foot. I thought this the most unreasonable thing Mother had ever required of me, and argued that I could not do what she asked of me without breaking the keys. She told me that it was possible to perform this action so softly that there would be no damage to the piano; and, by her own demonstration, she proved that it could be done.

For suppleness of spine, she devised the plan of stacking pillows on the edge of my bed to such a height that, with my first attempt at back-bending, I could touch the topmost one with my head. As I developed flexibility, through persistent work, the pillows were removed one by one until the time came, a year and a half later, when I could reach the bed itself, and even pick up a handkerchief from it with my teeth.

Too, the other exercises which Mother had planned for me were practiced and improved upon daily until they reached the same degree of perfection.

In the coming spring, April, 1916, a Shakespearean festival was staged at our largest hotel, and Mother and I were invited. She chose for me the character of Orlando and ordered my costume accordingly.

Thus far, I had not read any of Shakespeare's plays, or seen any acted, and I had only a slight conception of the meaning of the celebration. But I did know that I liked my velvet doublet and hose and the part I played in mingling socially with the other gaily attired guests.

The next day, before returning my costume, Mother took me to our photographer's studio, where at her direction, I enacted before the camera three poses from the little story she had originated for this purpose. In the first pose, I was supposed to stand smilingly at the door of my sweetheart; in the second, to see a rival approaching; and, in the third, to make believe draw my sword as though I were going to fight him.

It took some time to get me in the mood for the taking of these pictures, for Mother denied me the use of the gold-headed cane which I had practiced with at home, in lieu of a sword; and, without something to take the place of it, I refused to bring the right expressions into play for the dashing young lover I was to represent. The photographer, upon learning the reason for my unfavorable attitude, dispatched a messenger to his home for his

own sword, with the result that I posed for the pictures in the spirit desired of me.

This account of the forces contributing to my advancement, that winter and spring, would not be complete without mention of a certain influence with which I came in contact, and which proved of invaluable benefit to me. But in setting forth this circumstance, it becomes necessary to deal to some extent with Mother's ambitions and plans of the preceding summer and autumn.

The success of her work with me was becoming well known throughout Oklahoma and neighboring states, and for months she had been receiving numerous letters regarding it. Parents of deaf children were asking her advice on the subject of training for their afflicted ones, while many were hoping that their children might receive instruction from her.

Mother's sympathy, and her great desire to help others, had led her to think of turning our home into a school for little deaf children. But, after carefully considering the matter, she saw that in so broadening her scope of teaching, she would rob me of the individual attention I yet required, thereby interfering with my progress so largely that her high aims for me could never be consummated. My education in the so-called grammar-school subjects was yet in an elementary stage, as a result of my having had to devote so much time to the learning of speech; and this work, to say nothing of speech and its related studies, taxed Mother's strength to the utmost, and it

was not deemed wise for her to assume any extra responsibility.

However, she found that she could consistently take a little deaf child into our home occasionally until there was sufficient development that the parents would feel encouraged over the prospects for speech, and thus be influenced into placing the child permanently in some good oral school. This plan of temporarily instructing such a child enabled Mother to give the parents a comprehensible and striking example of the advantages to be had with early training, and the dangers of delay.

Again, if a mother felt the urge to learn how to set up some development in her own child, Mother would teach them both in our home for a time, afterwards keeping in touch with the case and further lending her aid insofar as possible.

It was that winter, in December, that little Ellen Johns came to us; she was five years old and without speech, having been totally deaf from early infancy. I mention her for the reason that she is an ideal illustration of what can be accomplished with a young deaf child in a highly favorable environment.

She was with us but one month, and to this day I find myself marveling at the progress she made in this short time. Not only did she learn to say some fifty words correctly and naturally and use them freely, but to express herself in such simple sentences as "I love

Mama," "I love Papa," etc. She was even able to write from dictation many of these words and sentences, as well as the numerals from 1 to 7.

I sat up until past twelve o'clock the night before she left, helping Mother in building the picture-book which was to illustrate the words and sentences Ellen could say, and which she was to take home with her.

The next morning, as I stooped to kiss her good-bye, I fastened around her neck the ribbon with the little gold pendant that the Sisters had given me at the sanitarium in Sherman; for she was a Catholic, and had a right to wear it.

I could cite dozens of instances relative to Ellen, which would be of help to parents in demonstrating the value of early training for their deaf children,—instances of development which could be brought about only with one whose speech muscles and mental faculties had not been dulled or weakened by years of disuse,—but space does not permit.

Ellen's capability for learning presented such a decided contrast to my slow and labored steps toward speech, in its early stages, that I began to doubt the wonder of my own accomplishments, and the sincerity of those who so lavishly praised me.

When beholding some fresh example of her alertness, I saw myself, in learning to talk, struggling for months to gain the same speech principle or word that she had

acquired in but a few days. Surely, I thought, I must have been very stupid, and would thereupon exclaim, "Why, she is only five, and I was twelve!"

"Yes," Mother would answer, "but she is close to the natural age for learning to talk, while you were far beyond it, with interest and desire long dead. You are the wonder," she would emphasize, "not she; for have you not surmounted obstacles that do not lie in her pathway at all."

In watching this child of five unfold day by day, and seeing her gain so much through her spontaneity and eagerness, I realized for the first time how much my development was due to Mother's efforts alone.

I saw that with one as young as Ellen was, the teaching of her, when once started in speech, was mostly a matter of rightly guiding her footsteps along the open and joyous highroad of learning; while with me, the way had been but a tortuous path, blocked with destructive forces which had to be cleared away, one by one, for every step I took. And she, my courageous mother, had undertaken the task and unfalteringly led me on, without the stimulus which comes from working with a bright and willing pupil.

Probably nothing in all the years of my training so tended to strengthen my will to succeed as did this thought regarding Mother's work with me.

Then, there rushed upon me a feeling of pity for every deaf boy and girl who had been denied a fair chance

for speech and knowledge. I wanted all afflicted children to have the advantage of such training as had come to Ellen, and their education furthered until they reached the heights of natural expression; and I pictured the time when, in some way, I might be an influence for their betterment.

CHAPTER XX

Nature Receives Me into Her School of Beauty and Rhythm

In Mother's scheme of training for me there had long been the hope that, for a few months at least, I might experience rural life with its countless benefits and pleasures. I was now ready for the broader study of Nature which she wished to give me, and she was making every effort to take me to the country the following summer.

To have a farm somewhere in the East was her desire, a place not necessarily large, but distinguished by certain features which she deemed necessary to this development, and so situated that Mildred's interests might be furthered as well. Mildred had begun taking lessons on the violin from a local teacher more than a year before, and it was important that we establish ourselves within easy reach of a good school of music.

Naturally, Mother decided upon her native state, New York, with its peerless scenic beauties and delightful summer climate, as a highly desirable section of the country for us. And as Ithaca afforded the musical advantages for Mildred, she wanted the farm to be near that city.

But who to get to make the careful search for the place, and then manage it in a manner to meet our particular needs, was the problem; and for a time it looked as though these plans would not materialize.

Then, Uncle John, Mother's brother whom I have mentioned in earlier chapters of this story, happened to make us a visit during the Christmas holidays. He volunteered his services in the project, and upon leaving us, went directly to New York State to locate the farm, thus settling the matter most happily for us.

In March we received the good news that the ideal place for our purpose had been found,—one with the stream, hills, lanes, and woods that Mother had insisted upon, and many other points besides to delight her and aid her in furthering Mildred's and my summer education. The farm was some eighteen miles south of Ithaca, Uncle John's letter stated, and nestled in a beautiful valley, close to densely wooded hills, and scarcely a mile from a gem of a village and the railroad.

The days could not pass swiftly enough for me now. Already I was getting together such books and paraphernalia as I would need in this School of Nature to which I was going, and reading much pertaining to the history and geography of Central and Southern New York.

The first of June, the time set for our leaving, seemed far away; but it came at last, and the fourth of the month found us stepping off the train at Candor, almost there.

Uncle John, with the horses and wagon, was at the

station to meet us, and soon we were wending our way through the shady village, then up the valley in true, rural style. I became so absorbed in the scenes along the way and Mother's talk about them, that before I realized how far we had gone, Uncle John was turning the horses from the main road into the driveway and proclaiming, "Here you are!"

Before alighting, Mother and I stood in the wagon for a few moments, viewing with delight our new surroundings. Close about us lay fields of sprouting grain and meadows carpeted with the rich green of early summer. In front, below the highway and barns, through a line of trees, I caught glimpses of the stream which I had been told would give me so much pleasure; and just beyond, I beheld forest-covered hills, whose nearness so magnified their height that they seemed to bear the dignity of mountains. Away to the rear, my eyes followed the level fields, then the gentle slope, and the sudden rise to the hill-top pastures, and rested on the woods which stretched along the horizon.

In letters to Mildred and me, Uncle John had hinted of many an unusual thing which we would see upon our arrival at the farm, and Mildred was soon plying him with questions and begging to be shown her surprises immediately. But I was to have mine first, he said; and, taking me to the quaint old hall, he led me up the winding stairs and bade me look through the glass over the door for one of my surprises.

There, on the outside ledge, was a large nest with three baby birds in it, but I did not know what kind they were, as my study of birds had not advanced to the subject of nest-building. I turned to Uncle John for this information, but was told to sit quietly and keep my eyes on the window for my answer. It was a robin's home, of course, as I soon learned myself, when the mother bird flew back to her young.

Then Mildred got out the Nature Book of our Wonder World set, and there on the stairs she had me read with her the passages describing the building habits of this well-known bird, the robin.

Thus was the subject of nesting, the new and absorbing phase of bird-study, introduced to me, and my summer's work begun.

Before long I began to think the birds must have sensed my coming, and my interest in them, so many did I see about the place.

Out in the syringa bush at the corner of the house, a chipping sparrow built her nest of rootlets and horsehair; and near the kitchen door a song sparrow took up her abode, while her mate perched himself on the topmost point of a brush-pile nearby, and poured forth his song of joy from early morning until night. Orioles hung their pendant nests from the branches of the trees on the lawn, and colonies of goldfinches took possession of the old rail fence along the lane for their springtime frolics. It seemed that every tree and bush furnished me

with some opportunity for bird-study; and, in addition to my knowledge of nesting and habits, which was broadening daily, sixteen new names were soon added to the list of birds I could recognize.

In time our studies took us afield, and as Mildred and I roamed the meadows and woodland, we were carrying other equipment besides our bird guide-book and note-books; for we were beginning another fascinating nature-study, that of butterflies and moths.

To catch a butterfly in the net that Uncle John had made for me, place it in my tiny screened box, for study along with Mildred's captives, then go searching for another, filled me with a joy indescribable. To me, each butterfly was a winged fairy, with an existence at the best altogether too short, and I could not bear to hold one prisoner a moment longer than was necessary for actual study.

A woman from the village, having heard of my interest in butterflies and moths, called upon us one day and brought with her a serving-tray which she had made, thinking I would enjoy seeing her specimens and the use she had made of them. I was not in the least enthusiastic over the display of lovely wings against the background of milkweed floss beneath the glass, and told her quite frankly that butterflies were made for the sunshine and summer breezes, and I thought it a pity to kill the beautiful things.

One of the nature books I was using at this time was

Gene Stratton-Porter's "Moths of the Limberlost," and I loved to linger over the full-page color plates with which this volume was illustrated, particularly the picture of the Luna moth, which seemed to me the most beautiful of all. The more I studied its rare shape and coloring, the greater became my desire to find one of these "trailed aristocrats"; and in the field and woodland rambles, I was constantly on the outlook for one.

Midsummer found me still searching. Then one day, as Mildred and I were roaming over a field of stubble, I came suddenly upon the object of my quest. There in the morning sunshine was a Luna, newly emerged from the cocoon, lazily opening and closing its gossamer wings, which glowed with tints that no pen or picture could portray. The moth seemed too delicate for human touch, and it was with the utmost care that I eased it off onto my finger and carried it in this manner triumphantly to the house for Mother to see, with Mildred far in advance of me, heralding the news of my good fortune.

We gave this lovely stranger a place on the low branch of an apple tree by the kitchen door, where from time to time during its short sojourn with us, we studied it and paid tribute to its beauty.

At the head of the long lane where Mildred with Jack, the Collie dog, rounded up the cows each evening from the hill-top pastures, there stood a lone tree which she had named her "Grand Old Maple," by reason of its great size and age.

To this spot I often came with Mildred after some trip of exploration, or for huckleberries, and stretched myself out beneath the wide-spread branches, while she pictured for me in simple language scenes of the long ago, when these fertile valley farms were but a forest, peopled with Indians.

And, as we talked together in the drowsy stillness of a summer's day, with the gentle breezes wafting the fragrance of pine and hemlock and the sweet-smelling fern from the woods and the huckleberry patch above us, I so lived in the stories she presented that the smoke, rising from the kitchen chimney of our farmhouse below, became a sign of an Indian camp fire, and our little raft in the stream beyond, a canoe gliding noiselessly along by wooded banks, where tents and painted face and feather made splashes of brightness 'mid the green of the forest.

Often we carried with us some book or magazine which we fancied would prove especially interesting at such times of rest beneath this shady tree.

It was here in this inspiring atmosphere that I first caught the spirit of Longfellow's "Hiawatha," which I was studying with Mother. She had found a copy of this work in the Minnehaha edition on our last trip to Washington; and now, under the spell of the "Grand Old Maple Tree," and Mildred's dramatic recitation for me of the portions of the poem she had memorized at the age of five, the numerous pictures illustrating the book, and the story itself, began to take on a new meaning.

Practically everything I read at this time still had to be treated as a study; for I was constantly coming across words whose meaning I had to learn, either from the dictionary, or Mother's explanations by action or transposition into simpler language. Hence, when first beginning a story, there was little enjoyment or understanding in it for me.

Later, as my knowledge of words increased, I was required to list for study the unfamiliar ones as I came to them, then to reread the pages I had covered, for better comprehension of the story. To this day, I have continued the practice of making note of new words, as the lists in many a treasured book would testify.

Here on the farm, as in Muskogee when we had no maid, I had certain household tasks to perform. So by eight o'clock, the time fixed for the morning studies to begin, I had set the table for breakfast, wiped the dishes after the meal, made the beds, dusted the sleeping rooms, and taken a fifteen-minute outing, having risen shortly after five.

The speech lessons came first on our schedule and included the vocal scale-work, specific vowel and consonant study, and oral practice of lengthy passages from some of my books.

Then followed the lip-reading drill of sentences containing the words which I had not understood the day before, when members of the family had spoken to me, and which Mother had made note of at the time. Prior

to this practice, however, on the same day of these mistakes, I had been required to take the list and repeat each expression by myself, often as many as fifty times, over and over before my hand-mirror, studying my lips as I talked, and writing the utterance as well.

This method made me strive for more alertness in speech-reading; for I disliked the very sight of these long lists, with each thought headed by the bold figure denoting the number of times I was to write and talk it.

Nor was I allowed to drop such lessons until I could read every word, phrase, or sentence under study as readily on the lips of the home folks, when mingling with them, as in the special drill with Mother.

As the conversation directed to me daily held many a new word, I foresaw the long stretch of this practice in store for me, and at times was none too agreeable when thus studying. I often thought Mother a hard taskmaster; but I know now that without this thorough grounding then and for years afterward, I would never have become proficient in reading speech directed to me, or in following conversation among others.

The formal speech and lip-reading lessons lasted for an hour; then, after a short recess, Mother worked with me at the piano, also with my history and geography. At eleven-fifteen I was free to embroider or read until noon.

Frequently in the afternoon at two-thirty, following my nap, we all went to the brook for our water frolic,

and waded, fished, or basked in the sunshine until nearly four.

There was just one place in the stream deep enough for me to swim in; and even now I can see myself as I went 'round and 'round in this small pool, with strokes much like those of my companion, the dog, who seemed quite willing to share with me this bit of water which he had discovered before my arrival.

Fresh from the afternoon rest and pleasures, I resumed my studies, giving an hour to language and arithmetic, and practicing again on the piano before supper.

As I was in a speech atmosphere from the time I opened my eyes in the morning until I closed them for sleep at night, being constantly encouraged into talking freely and fully with clear enunciation, like a normal person, and receiving corrections in my utterances whenever technical or grammatical mistakes occurred, it can readily be seen that my instruction in speech, as well as language, now as heretofore, was by no means limited to the formal periods.

On alternate days, when the weather was favorable, my morning studies ended at nine-thirty, and the time from then until noon was spent in the open on the jaunts of exploration to field and wood with Mildred. The afternoons of these days were given over largely to the writing of my morning experiences.

In the upper hall, by the big front window, Mildred and I each had a little table where we kept our books

and writing materials. Here, it was our custom to write in detail everything we had seen or done on the nature excursions. After I had completed my little stories, Mother would go through them with me, showing me the errors, how to correct them, also how to beautify the various accounts by a broader use of descriptive words. Together we would diagram sentence after sentence, study from the dictionary the meaning of the words she had introduced into the composition, and search the synonym book for the word or phrase which would best express an idea, thus eliminating many an overworked word.

In the language-study period next day I would completely rewrite each story, attempting to dismiss from my mind the simple style of the original, and to build instead an entirely new and better construction, with the use of more compound and complex sentences. Mother was determined to break up the short, childish sentences which yet characterized all my writing. As I had the faculty of memorizing easily, I was never allowed to dwell on the original account any longer than was actually necessary to prepare me for this advanced writing, not even to copy the work after it had been studied, lest it become so fixed in my mind that it would interfere with my efforts to express myself in a different manner.

The early supper hour on the farm gave me long evenings to enjoy. I spent them mostly on the lawn, reading and embroidering and conversing until the sun

dropped behind the hill and sent its changing light over field and wood, making a different picture each night for me to admire. Then, filled with the beauty of the closing day, I would go to my room, don the gauzy dancing drape which Mother had made for me, and return to the open to practice my æsthetic movements, which consisted of many of the steps and poses that had been used in my speech and piano practice to give me the feeling of correct phrasing.

One evening as I came down the steps, Mother looked at me wonderingly and exclaimed, "Why, this cannot be Helen—it must be a beautiful nymph from the woods!"

I smilingly nodded my approval of this bit of fanciful play which she was leading me into.

"But," she continued, "it really cannot be one, for wood-nymphs never come out of houses."

For a moment I did not know what was expected of me. Then my imaginative faculties began to work, and I hastily retraced my steps, passed through the house and out at the rear; and, when Mother next saw me, I was slowly emerging from behind a flowering bush in front, near the place where I was to practice.

Then, at her direction, I, the wood-nymph, became by turns a butterfly, a bird, a fairy, as I flitted about on the lawn in the mellow glow of twilight,—in this land of make-believe,—executing the steps of these interpretations that Mother had led me into.

Here, in this great school of the open, with daily object-lessons from Nature, the original teacher of artistic rhythm, I learned to find poetry of motion in the rippling leaves and swaying branches; in the movements of the butterflies, and the graceful dip of the swallows as they skimmed the air about the barn; in the sheets of rain which swept down from the woods and across the fields, and dashed against our window-panes; and in the clouds that drifted lazily or sailed majestically across the sky.

How I welcomed the haying season with its untold surprises and pleasures! Never before had I raced between long windrows of fragrant clover or timothy; played among the cocks that thickly dotted the fields; ridden to the barn on a load of hay, slid down from it, or jumped into the springy mows.

The ladder-climbing practice into the old trees at cherry-picking time had helped to prepare my mind and body for a fuller enjoyment of these new experiences. Mildred had scampered up the ladder like a squirrel, and I should have gone up it with ease, if not speed, for my sense of balance had been constantly improving. But the fear of falling from high places, which had taken deep root in my mind in childhood, was still so strong within me that at first I could not be persuaded to ascend beyond the second round. With coaching from Mother and Mildred, and much effort of my own, I finally gained sufficient courage to go up the ladder and down again, then to pick cherries from the higher branches as I stood

Dance expression in the School of Nature—Summer, 1916.

As she appeared in one of the dance numbers at her first public appearance early in the year of 1917.

at the top, or on some accommodating limb, which feat gave me a feeling of keen satisfaction.

I am loth to pass on in my writing without recounting a certain incident of the happy haying-time.

Frequently throughout the early summer we had noticed a large fat man driving by, all alone in his buggy. But until a particular afternoon, when Mildred and I were in the hay-field by the road, he had held no greater interest for me than many another person who passed our place to and from the village.

This day, however, Mildred made him an important character in an impromptu scene which she staged for my benefit. When she saw him coming down the road, she picked up a rake, placed it in my hand, and, posing me against a haycock, declared, "Now you are Maud Muller!"

The horse by this time was jogging along directly opposite us; and, taking my cue from Mildred's mischievous smile as she called my attention to the driver, I did what she was hoping I would do,—exclaimed with a burst of enthusiasm, "And there goes the Judge!"

Although we never learned the real name of this man, who unknowingly made it possible for Mildred to so illustrate this bit of the poem "Maud Muller" for me, we always thought of him or spoke of him thereafter by the title, "The Judge," which had been given him in our little play.

It was just such incidental helpfulness as this, that

summer, together with other instances I have already mentioned, that stimulated my imagination and broadened my interest in many a subject.

Ingenious instruction of this kind has often even rid my mind of rankling thoughts and filled it with happiness and peace.

Vividly do I recall the day that a sudden rain prevented a long-planned trip to the laurel-woods and caused my first real disappointment.

I had been told of the wondrous beauty of the bushes in blossom; their great number in this spot where we were going; the pleasure of the long drive with our neighbors in the commodious, high-seated wagon through the valley and over the hills; the fun we would have eating our lunch on the trip; and when my disappointment came, it seemed more than I could bear.

I would do nothing but stand by the window, gazing disconsolately at the downpour, and hoping that it would stop in time for us to go after all. Mother tried to interest me in various activities, but to no avail. I was angry at Nature herself, and refused to be consoled even with the promise of the trip on the following Sunday.

It was late in the afternoon of that day that the clouds rolled away and left a smiling sun, and a lawn bedecked with myriads of Nature's diamonds. Mother took me out and showed them to me, but each sparkling drop only reminded me of the rain that had frustrated my hopes and deprived me of my pleasure.

Then she carried two chairs to the lawn and placed them beside the path, with mats at our feet. At her bidding, though reluctantly, I sat down beside her. Soon, however, my attitude began to change and I was forgetting my troubles under the spell of the new study which she was introducing to me,—that of the weeds which grew at our feet and over which I had danced each evening, never suspecting that such beauty as I now beheld under this close scrutiny, lay hidden in the carpet of grass, and had names.

The scrap-book which we started that very hour, lies before me as I write, carrying me back to that scene on the lawn and bringing to mind the eagerness with which I searched for different specimens, pinned them into the book, and wrote their names underneath.

So, objects of Nature usually considered unlovely, were included in my lessons on beauty that summer.

Many a time I have been told to go to a window or door and decide upon some ordinary feature of the landscape for study, then take paper and pencil and describe it as beautifully as I possibly could. For instance, the old rail-fence along the lane was certainly not attractive in itself; but when the mind brought into the picture the rich carpet of grass on either side of the cow-path in the center, the graceful slope it followed, some tree that shadowed it, one could not think or write of it as wholly unbeautiful.

Thus I learned that a piece of bark from an old tree,

a chip from the woodpile, some stone in creek or field, the harmless snakes we came across in our rambles, the tiny lizards that basked in the sunshine, and many another object generally ignored or unloved by man, held points of astonishing beauty when looked upon with a discerning eye.

By now, I could even watch the conflict of the elements with interest, and find beauty in the severest thunder-storm, so completely had I lost my fear of them, in my better understanding of Nature.

Tuesday was the day set aside each week for the trips to Ithaca for Mildred's violin lessons; and, on these mornings, it was necessary for Mother to get up at four o'clock in order to prepare the breakfast and wash the dishes, leave a lunch on the table for Uncle John, and have Mildred and me ready in time for the forty-five-minute walk to Candor to meet the six o'clock train.

We had a wait of an hour and a half in Ithaca before Mildred's lesson, and three hours afterward, but not a moment of this time was ever wasted; for, during these waits, Mother not only made us familiar with the historical features and scenic beauties of this home of Cornell University, but also found for us interesting and profitable lessons in many a commonplace thing we passed.

On our way uptown from the station there was a little old Italian bakery, whose only sign of merit seemed to be the rich odor of fresh, crusty bread which emanated

from it. One morning it happened that the proprietor stood in the doorway as we passed, and the remark Mother made to him brought us an invitation to enter. I had never known before that such an oven as was shown us existed, or that so much bread could be baked at one time.

The sidewalks alone in this interesting city, built as they were of huge squares of stone, most of them smooth beyond imagination, and cut from the native rock in and around Ithaca years and years before, furnished a pleasant lesson for me, and gave me something to ponder on as I walked over them.

By the time we had covered the distance from the station to the park adjoining the Conservatory, where we often sat and studied until the hour for Mildred's lesson, Mother was usually very tired. How well I remember the times we would pause at a small, ivy-covered church not far from our destination, with its built-in marble slab along the walls, and how Mother would pull aside the vines to better read the uplifting words chiselled in it, then resume the walk with a look on her face and a spring in her step which bespoke a lighter heart.

A few weeks before Mildred's course of lessons ended, Mother began to seek a place where we could get some simple dance-steps for me to practice along with those she had taught me. And, finding that what she desired could be had in one of the University buildings, we three, on our weekly trips to Ithaca, went directly there for this

work following Mildred's lesson at the Conservatory. Once or twice, when I could not go, Mother and Mildred received the instruction without me.

As August drew to a close, my regular schedule of study was dropped; for my father and brother had joined us, and we were making plans for our return to Muskogee.

One of the last pleasures I had before leaving was an afternoon spent in a neighbor's home, and the exploring of the big attic filled with mementos of the past. How much more real now seemed the stories that Mildred had told me of the Indians, when I was shown a collection of arrow-heads that had been picked up on this farm next to ours.

Many were the interesting tales told me that day of the forefathers of these neighbors,—how they had made the long trip from Connecticut in wagons drawn by ox-teams, made a clearing in the forest, and built this very house, more than one hundred years before.

So ended one of the most delightful and profitable summers that it has ever been my privilege to experience.

CHAPTER XXI

Another Winter of Close Application to Study—Then a Year of Diversified Work and Pleasure

THROUGHOUT the winter and spring of the coming year, my studies moved on without interruption. Intermingled were pleasures, of course, one of the most noteworthy being the occasion when I gave two simple dance-numbers in the ballroom of the Hotel Severs, for the local chapter of the P. E. O., of which organization I became a member the next year.

In the rhythmical practice at the farm and theretofore, little attention had been given to fitting the counts of my interpretive movements into music, or to arranging anything in fixed order.

But soon after our return home, Mother had begun to assemble these various movements into short studies, with a view to having me dance them as a whole. Then she brought into use an idea which had been growing in her mind for some time; that is, of outlining on paper for me the geometrical forms of these little numbers, each form showing the exact number of steps within its corresponding movement, for the purpose of enabling me to better

visualize the dance-parts in their correct continuity and position on the floor.

As a result of these dance-outlines, which greatly aided me in remembering the form of the movements and their order, and some practice with a pianist so that Mother could work into my consciousness more evenness of time, I did these numbers on the occasion mentioned in such a manner that the accompanist was able to follow me without glaring changes in the form of the music.

The success of this first public appearance in my dancing and music (for I gave two piano numbers also), and the added pleasure of the social dancing which I entered into following the program, made me happier than I had ever been before. One can imagine something of the satisfaction I felt in the accomplishments of the evening, as well as in the quality of my speech, when I was told a few days later that a young man with whom I had danced and talked, did not know I was deaf, and almost refused to believe it when some one informed him of the fact.

It was toward spring that year that a prominent citizen and nature-lover of Muskogee, Grant Foreman, offered an award of Ten Dollars in gold for the best essay on birds, the competition being open to boys and girls under sixteen years of age in our county.

I was past sixteen, and therefore not eligible to enter the contest. Besides, had I desired to do so, I was not

capable of writing a composition which would have given me any chance for the prize.

Mildred, however, became one of the competitors; and each day, as she jotted down some thought as it occurred to her, and enthusiastically dropped the slip of paper into the box in which she kept these notes for her story, no one suspected the envious feeling which was taking hold of me. Ere long, though, my attitude made it quite apparent that something was wrong with me, for old-time expressions were returning to my features, and moody spells becoming a frequent occurrence.

Then Mother began to observe me at all hours of the day, particularly when I was left alone at my studies; and one afternoon, when she happened to see me in the act of concealing something on the shelf where I kept my books, the cause of the trouble was learned. I had been living over in memory the clouded years of my earlier life,—I was describing the events of my childhood, preparatory to bringing the account up to date.

The excuse I gave Mother, when she questioned me as to the reason for this endeavor, was that Mildred was writing a story, and thereby making herself conspicuously important in the family circle, so why shouldn't I? Too, I argued, in defense of my efforts, was it not all right to thus tell of myself, since I had so often been told I was wonderful?

As Mother read on in my crude manuscript and came to the point where I gave my childhood experiences which

had caused the fear of falling, and detailed the experiences with the shadows which had so frightened me, she was horrified at the revelation of these early impressions, which had been imprisoned in my mind all these years,—thoughts she had never until then known rested there.

I told her that I was going to call my story "Then and Now," and tried to assure her that if she would be patient it would eventually be all right, for I would soon pass from the time which brought such memories, to the present when everything would be beautiful.

Still she emphasized that I must not write of subjects relative to my childhood, not even think of them. And, taking me to the mirror, she showed me how this dwelling on the past was affecting my peace of mind.

Mother had become so much a part of my very being, so necessary to my welfare, that I was beginning to feel I would be lost again if anything should happen to her. This was the reason which had prompted me to write of myself in my competition with Mildred; for I wanted some record of what I had accomplished.

It was only with Mother's promise that as soon as possible she would have some capable person compile for me the facts of my development which I desired, that I was convinced it was best to keep such thoughts in the background of my mind, and not write of them. And so well satisfied was I with this arrangement, that all my ill-feelings toward Mildred's writing endeavors were dispelled; and, when her bird-book (for it was more like a

book than an essay, the judges declared) won the prize in the contest, I rejoiced with her whole-heartedly.

July arrived, and we were still at work, having made no plans for a vacation. In fact, we had practically decided to remain at home; but a letter came from my brother saying that he and three other young men had taken a cottage at Winthrop, a summering place on Boston Harbor, and that they were hoping we could join them. There was plenty of room for us all, he wrote; and, as he and the boys would be there only before and after business hours, and Sundays, we could have the cottage to ourselves most of the time, thus giving us the opportunity of carrying on our work as though we were at home.

As a result of this invitation I had over five delightful weeks at Winthrop. Our cottage was one of several in a lovely park at the water-front, and was the property of the big Cottage Park Hotel close by.

Though the mornings, and from lunch until two, were devoted to study and household tasks, the remainder of the afternoons, and the evenings, were entirely mine to enjoy. I had never had such a variety of pleasurable activities as I found here. There was bathing in the large open pool, dancing and entertainments at the hotel, social gatherings in private homes, trips by boat to other resorts, educational sight-seeing tours of Boston and its vicinity, and with it all, new friends for me on every hand.

As this was the time when women everywhere were occupying their leisure moments in knitting, and I saw them plying their needles on train, boat, or hotel veranda, I naturally wanted to learn to knit. One of the girls at the hotel, with whom I had formed a close friendship, taught me. Also, she showed me how to play tennis; but I was not particularly interested in the sport from the standpoint of becoming a good player, and found more enjoyment in watching others at this strenuous game than in taking part in it myself.

The dances at the hotel were a source of much pleasure to me. Once I remember of returning to the cottage in higher spirits than usual, for I had danced every number that evening.

But it was the bathing-pool which brought me my happiest hours. I loved to splash about in the water, sun myself on the sand, or sit on the broad concrete wall as the tide flowed or ebbed, marveling at the power which caused this great influx and reflux of the waters of the mighty ocean, and discussing with Mother the lessons we had studied pertaining to it.

With the combined efforts of her and Chester, my brother, I learned to swim correctly that summer. He taught me the breast and crawl strokes; and afterward, when I could do fairly well by myself with either of them, Mother took me over and began a veritable campaign to establish habits of correct breathing in connection with this exercise.

By keeping right with me as I swam each day, she gradually broke up the short and irregular breathing and grunting sounds which accompanied my efforts. Before the season ended I could race with ease across the sixty-foot pool in the frolics with others, or swim out into the harbor beyond the confines of the pool, and dive from Chester's shoulders; and all with a joyousness which held not the least bit of fear.

How dear to me are the memories of the hours I spent in a home in Winthrop, whose mistress, Miss Morris, often entertained me with tales of her travels, and of the operas and dramas she had seen. For instance, she had seen "Carmen" thirty times, the first being in 1879, when this opera was given in Boston with Minnie Hauk as Carmen, just following its initial performance in this country.

She was greatly interested in my rhythmical work and the expressiveness which it brought to my countenance, and many times asked me to dance for her. Also, there was an understanding between us that whenever she wished me to entertain any of her friends who might be visiting her, I would do so, no matter how short the notice. With what delight would I gather up a costume or two in response to some message from her, and appear at her home at the appointed hour!

A fine pianist of Boston, who was Miss Morris' summer guest, always played for me at such times. Occasionally Mother arranged for practice with him, in order

that we might work for improvement in my simple numbers.

One morning at the conclusion of our practice-period, I announced that I wished to do my interpretation of Carmen, a series of steps and pantomime which I had conceived from seeing Spanish dancing and acting now and then in photoplays or vaudeville, and with which Mother had helped me in arrangement and expression.

This announcement astounded Mr. Strong, the accompanist, and for a few minutes it looked as though I was not going to have any musical background for my dancing; for he could not bear to think, he said, of my portraying a character so in contrast to my pure and æsthetic self. Nevertheless, he honored me with his wonderful playing, choosing of his own accord the beautiful and appropriate "Habañera" from the opera "Carmen," with all the interest which he would have displayed had I been a great dancer.

Later, when he gave two piano solos at the entertainment which marked the closing of the hotel for the summer, I had the pleasure of appearing on the same program, doing the kind of dances that he liked best,—the Nature dances,—also an interpretation of the "Star-Spangled Banner," which Mother created and worked up for the occasion. At an earlier musicale, I had played two piano numbers,—accompaniments to Mildred's violin solos.

We left Winthrop on the eighth of September, making

a short stop in New York City, and a visit in Washington on our way back to Muskogee.

Home again, my studies moved on as usual, save that Mother and I, like women throughout the land, were giving what aid we could in the war work which was now so necessary. We frequently went to town together to hear lectures on food conservation, first aid, etc., but more often I went alone to the Red Cross Headquarters to add my bit of service to the cause.

I must confess, however, that the huge piles of surgical dressings had a most depressing effect upon me, for each article I handled seemed to speak of the suffering brought by war, and made me feel that small, indeed, were my efforts toward its relief. Hence, when the opportunity came for me to serve my country in a happier and bigger way, by giving a dance-program for the benefit of the Red Cross, I welcomed it and entered into the preparations with a patriotic enthusiasm which almost equaled the joy I felt in the anticipation of again expressing myself publicly in my dancing.

Having promised that Mildred and I would give this benefit performance, Mother was determined to so manage the affair that it would be a success artistically as well as financially; and we forthwith set to work to plan the program.

Besides the two dances I had given at my first public appearance in Muskogee the year before, I had, for this prospective entertainment, a wood-nymph dance which

Mother and I had worked out together, and which included such nature movements as I had practiced at the Candor farm, also a patriotic closing number which we were now creating.

For the opening of the program, Mother was contemplating a group of tableaus; and, inasmuch as the mirror had played so great a part in my development, as well as purity of thought, and prayer, it occurred to her that nothing would be more appropriate for this purpose than representations of these forces. So she at once incorporated in my daily æsthetic work the study of artistic posing, not limiting the practice, however, to the three poses I was to give on the program, but having me do others as well, for the acquisition of better poise and more expressiveness of face.

These numbers I have described, together with the new dances that Mother was planning to get, my piano selections, and Mildred's violin solos, would form a program, she decided, which would give a full evening of entertainment.

We got three dances and a prelude at the Mahler School in St. Louis with which to round out our program. In our hotel room there, between the lessons, and from the time we returned home until the evening of the performance, Mother, Mildred, and I worked intensively on these new dances, fixing the counts and steps in my mind with the aid of Mother's Graphic Method, which she had used at the lessons to record them, fitting the movements

A pose from the patriotic dance on the Red Cross Benefit program—April 26th, 1918.

As she appeared in her "Wood-nymph dance"—Summer of 1918.

to music with a view to synchronization, and working on rhythm as we had done and were still doing with my other numbers.

Costumes for these new dances had to be designed and made, as well as one for the old-time piano numbers I was to do; and, as I had not then acquired sufficient knowledge of dressmaking to be of much assistance in this respect, the work kept Mother busy each night long after I had gone to bed.

Then came the rehearsing of the program as a whole, days upon days of it, and finally the great event itself.

When it was all over, and I was told the amount of money we had earned, read the glowing account the next morning of my dancing and music, received the congratulations of friends and strangers, I felt that I had, indeed, cause to be happy, yes proud, of this new achievement. But my spirits soared still higher when there came the letter from Mr. Foreman, in behalf of the Muskogee Chapter of the Red Cross Organization, complimenting me on my appearance, and telling me of the great good which the proceeds of the concert would do for our soldiers at the front.

CHAPTER XXII

An Important Epoch in the Growth of an Art

ANOTHER summer was approaching, and Father and Mother were trying to arrive at a decision regarding the kind of a vacation which would be of the greatest benefit to me. My father thought it time for Mother and me to have a summer entirely free from work; but she argued that for several years, at least, there could be no such relaxation for either of us, until I had arrived at a perfection of speech, and an educational development that would put me on a plane with the normal girl. She finally won him over to her way of thinking, and it was decided that no matter where we went, study on all my subjects should enter into my vacation as usual.

Mother had long foreseen that my dancing could be made more than simply a source of pleasure to me, and an aid to rhythmical speech and music, for which it had been introduced early in my training,—that in it lay possibilities for a career, my life work, with a scope of expression for me such as could not be found in any other field.

As there were many in those days possessing vague ideas regarding the fitness of dancing as a profession, is it

surprising that my father happened to be one of them? There were persons in our town (though I did not know it then) who sincerely believed, as he had done eight years before when my brother had first wanted to learn to dance, that even the waltz or the two-step was not to be considered a righteous activity for Christian people.

But so startling had been Father's changes of opinion during those eight years, that now, as summer grew nearer, and Mother discussed with him her desires of taking me to some place where we could establish ourselves in a noted school of dancing, and give over two or three months to study, he began to show almost as much interest in the project as she herself.

Mother wanted a school of broad scope, where I would experience the joy of competition with hearing girls; but the question of just where we would go had remained undecided until one evening at a picture-house, when several scenes of the Denishawn School were run in connection with the feature-picture.

Mother had long known of Ruth St. Denis' fame as a dancer, but that she together with her famous husband, Ted Shawn, had in recent years opened a school in California, was news to her. As a result of the knowledge gained that evening at the picture-show, a letter went forth the very next day to the effect that Mother was considering work for me that summer, and wished full information regarding the school. We were thinking seriously of going to California, provided there was an

opening in the classes, and dormitory accommodations for us.

We arrived in Los Angeles on the ninth of June, and before the summer's work started and Father left for home, we had wonderful trips to Mount Lowe, Catalina Island, Busch's Gardens, the Cawston Ostrich Farm, the California Alligator Farm, and San Gabriel Mission.

So far on the road to normality was I already, that we had not looked upon the application for a place for me in this hearing girls' school as anything out of the ordinary. But upon our arrival at Denishawn, Mother was told that her letter, requesting instruction for a totally deaf person, had occasioned considerable apprehension until the little booklet of facts regarding my training had been received, together with the information that my mother-teacher would be with me throughout the course, and would be my hearing self, as it were, in the work wherever necessary.

To this day our hearts are filled with gratitude for that wonderful summer at Denishawn. The instructors were kindness itself, and were only too happy to co-operate with Mother in her knowledge of my needs.

For instance, how gladly the teacher of "Bar" technique lent herself to Mother's suggestions, when she learned that my failure to take the instruction at the first class lesson had been due to the unfavorable position I had occupied near the head of the line, rather than to a lack of ability to grasp the work.

When, at the next lesson, I was placed in the center of the line, where I could read the teacher's lips, and watch the girls ahead of me for change of movement and rhythm, she saw plainly that I was capable of doing practically anything that the others could do, and did not need the private instruction she had scheduled to prepare me for this "Bar" work.

Although I had never had such broad and highly organized technical work as these "Bar" exercises,—in fact, had never even seen a "Bar,"—the gymnastics which Mother had set up years before for giving me more slenderness and suppleness of body, and which she had made me practice against my wishes, made it possible for me to learn the most difficult movements quite readily, and without experiencing any lameness from them either.

There was scarcely a night that summer when Mother went to bed before midnight; and there were times when one o'clock found her still at work, going over the dance-steps which she had roughly outlined for me during the day's lessons, checking up the counts of these movements with the corresponding passages of music, and building her graphic outlines to more completeness for me to work from on the morrow. Likewise, much of the work on the costumes for my new dances was done in the evening, as well as the arranging of notes which she and Mildred had taken at lectures for me.

Then, there was make-believe music to be prepared, for me to hold before me as I practiced the dancing les-

sons (another of Mother's inventions for my benefit),—manuscript music-sheets divided into measures, corresponding to those of the musical composition to which the dance was set, and with the counts of the various dance-movements written in.

At first, in filling in the measures which she had thus marked off on this manuscript paper, Mother followed the same order of counting which had been given us in the lessons, no matter how small or large the groups happened to be.

Usually these counts naturally fell into small groups such as 1 2 3, 1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4 5 6, depending, of course, upon the character of the musical accompaniment; but occasionally they were arranged in large groups, in accordance with the number of times a dance-step was repeated within some movement or part thereof, for example, from 1 to 12, 16, 20, or 24, as the case might be.

Mother saw that when I practiced to such sets of numbers past ten, I unconsciously slackened my tempo just in proportion to the length of time it took me to say or think these figure-names of two or three syllables. Hence, it was necessary for her to use only small groups of numbers, never exceeding ten, in the make-believe music and the Graphic Dance-recordations.

In one of the inspiring lectures which Miss St. Denis gave every two weeks, she mentioned the need of some universally accepted method of dance-recordation which would serve the student of the dance, just as the stan-

dardized system of musical notation serves the student of music, and commented upon the merits of Mother's manner of recording dances for me, saying that this method came the closest to anything of this sort that she had seen.

As Mildred was a pupil in the class work with me, and accompanied Mother to all my private lessons, she was of much aid to us both in many ways. Even though she kept up her violin practice, took the French lessons which were included in my course, and had work in Spanish on the outside, she was always finding opportunities to help me along in my endeavors.

Mother, Mildred, and I were up almost every morning at five-thirty, and on the floor of the big dance-pavilion ready for work by six o'clock. A complaint was made against this practice so early in the morning, and for a time it looked as though we might have to discontinue it. But when we heard that Miss St. Denis had made the remark that no one should be deprived of the privilege of getting all that was possible from the work in her school, we went on with the early morning practice as usual.

As one could always find a vacant room somewhere, in the morning or afternoon, in which to work, and did not have to limit her practice to the hour and room assigned her on the daily lesson charts, I had many periods of practice each day. Occasionally, when the various steps of some dance had been perfected, and were ready to be

put together, we had Mr. Horst, the school accompanist, play for me. His superior knowledge of music and the dance, and his understanding of my case, made it possible for him to be of great help to us in thus rounding up a number.

As my work in speech, voice-culture, piano, and composition was carried on regularly with Mother, here as at home, my days were filled with study and practice of these subjects and the dancing.

We seldom did any work after supper, but spent the evening, until my bedtime at nine o'clock, roaming about in beautiful Westlake Park just across the street, reading in the school library, or attending a picture-show.

One evening, at the beginning of the term, Miss St. Denis made us a visit in our room. I was kneeling by my bed in prayer when she entered, and did not know she was present until I arose and turned to kiss Mother goodnight. I had previously thought Miss St. Denis lovely, but never before or after, did she seem to me as beautiful as she was that night when she smiled upon me her appreciation of my development in educational and artistic lines.

Mother showed her the dancing costumes she had made for my appearance in the Red Cross Benefit that spring. Miss St. Denis pronounced them very attractive, but said that the messaline slips should be removed. One could not do justice to herself in bodily action or beauty of line, she emphasized, with so much thickness of drape.

Mother's ideas regarding appropriate costuming for me had never been narrow; but she had realized that until she had brought my father to a complete understanding of the dance as an art, and its fitness as a career for me, she had to move with caution in the matter of using strictly professional drapes, which would reveal the contours of the body, lest my prospects in the work I so loved be jeopardized.

Now, however, Mother told Miss St. Denis, since Father's lengthy visit in the school, his pleasure in getting us settled, and his interest in the classes he had attended, she felt that the time had arrived when she could take greater liberties in the building of my costumes.

Of course, in recent years, I have learned of the widespread opposition to the dance which had to be overcome by the valiant efforts of the pioneers in this Art and their followers; but, until a few months ago, when I carefully went through the Red Cross Benefit matter, which had been preserved along with other records of my development, I had never known that any thoughts other than beautiful approbation had ever greeted my work in the dance. The latter truth came to me through finding a clipping of my picture from a local paper, announcing this war-time entertainment,—a clipping which someone had sent anonymously with the word "TRAVESTY" printed at the edge of the picture, which showed me in gauzy drape, with leg uncovered below the knee by reason of the pose I had assumed.

Soon after the work had started at the school, the girls of the dormitory arranged a "stunt program," with numbers to show their ability in the dance. I chose my wood-nymph dance for its wide range of emotional expression; and I did it in the same costume that I had used when dancing this number at home, but without the messaline slip, and with only my tights under the soft folds of georgette.

When my time came to appear on this program, Mother explained that the dance had never been worked out with music, as I had objected, on the plea that wood-nymphs never had to bother with counting. Whereupon Miss St. Denis sweetly remarked, so I was told afterward, "Of course wood-nymphs don't count—bless her heart!"

Naturally the dance suffered for lack of synchronization with the music which Mr. Horst furnished for me; but so cleverly did he conceal this defect that, as a whole, the dance was a success. And, at its conclusion, I was made supremely happy when informed of Miss St. Denis' enthusiastic comment to the audience of instructors and pupils,—"That is real Art!"

A few weeks later another program, with numbers which the pupils had learned that term, was being considered in honor of Ted Shawn, who was coming down from the army-camp where he was stationed, to make a short visit to the school.

My name was on the list with the other girls who

were to appear, and when Mother was questioned as to what dance I was planning to give, she was confronted with a problem which required much thought. She knew that I could not do justice to myself, or the work which had been given me, by using any number before I had had at least two months of practice on it. I had never yet experienced failure in giving an exhibition of any of my accomplishments, and she wished to avoid it now if possible. On the other hand, my feelings in the matter, she felt, were to be considered. Which would be the greater calamity, she debated, a failure in an attempt, or the discouragement I would suffer if not allowed to take part with the other girls.

My interest in the forthcoming event finally decided the matter in favor of my appearance, and Mother began at once to plan my costume and to work up the dance as well as she could within the allotted time, and without seriously neglecting other numbers I was practicing on. Of course we had to choose for this purpose the shortest and least complicated dance that had been taught me, regardless of style of costume or difficulty in managing it. The dance was an oriental one of religious nature.

As I was able to learn new steps quite readily, passing on to entirely new instruction as soon as all the parts of a dance had been given me, I had, at this time, an accumulation of work which had prohibited the concentration of our efforts, in the practice-periods, on any one dance toward its perfection.

The other girls, who could hear the musical accompaniment of a number, could prepare a dance, within their technical ability, in a very short time, and this right along with the new work as it came to them; for they did not have to concern themselves with the counts and tempos within the different movements, as the very music told them where there was a whirl, a retard, an acceerando, or a hold. But with me it required weeks of effort to have a number so that I could do it with even a fair degree of certainty, and months to so live in it that I could execute it with expression and rhythm.

My joy knew no bounds that night of the program as I stood waiting for my turn, garbed in the wonderful costume which Mother had made for me of white georgette and satin, the choli richly ornamented with pearls in designs of her own creation, and a head-dress to match of remarkable beauty.

But this happiness was short-lived; for, in the maze of uncertain counts, troublesome drapery, and order of movements, I so completely lost myself after the first two parts of the dance, that I could not pick up the thread of it, and kept doing one little series of steps over and over. Finally, after having managed somehow to collect my thoughts sufficiently to think of some pose with which to end the number, I rushed off the stage in a state of disappointment and embarrassment and barely escaped a collision with Mr. Shawn, who was exclaiming, as he grasped my hand, "Oh, you exquisite thing!" He

had hastened behind the scenes to tell me of Miss St. Denis' appreciation of my efforts, which message did much to modify my feelings of distress over the failure.

The dance which was scheduled for me to do at the end of the term, in the last recital, happened also to be one of the very first that had been given me; but the many weeks of practice which I had put upon it made it possible for me to go through it perfectly, without the least mistake in continuity of movement, or in the management of the immense circular veil which had to be handled differently with every change of movement and pose. The fact that the musician was able to play the accompaniment without favoring me to any marked extent, gave me as much pleasure as the execution of the dance itself.

A few days later, we were off for Santa Monica, where we were to have a month's outing before taking up the trip homeward.

I value most highly the photograph of Miss St. Denis which she gave me the day I left Los Angeles, and which she inscribed, "To Helen Heckman, whom we are so proud to have had at Denishawn, from her affectionate 'Miss Ruth.'" I turn the picture over and quote another beautiful thought from her pen: "We do not teach Helen Art—we only help her to find the means for her expression. She has the spirit in large and lovely measure within her—one of this world's pure and unspoiled individualities."

CHAPTER XXIII

Years of Study and Practice Bring Me Nearer the Goal for Which We Have Been Striving

How wonderful was the beach at Santa Monica; and how I enjoyed every moment of our stay in this paradise of glorious sunshine, invigorating air, and salt-water bathing!

The apartment which we occupied there was right at the seaside; and each morning at eleven-thirty, following the hours of practice on speech, music, and the dance, I would hurry with Mildred to the beach, where we would hunt for shells along the shore until Mother came with the basket of lunch for our picnic on the sand. Here we would stay until four o'clock, swimming, jumping the breakers, and diving through them; reading, talking, and napping, just as fancy dictated.

As a rule, we had our supper at five, and by six were out in the open again, strolling on walk or pier and drinking in the beauties which Nature here so lavishly gave to sky and sea at sunset. Never before or since have I seen such masses of wondrous and varied color as were flung across the heavens at Santa Monica; and never such a

picture of haunting beauty as the bay itself at twilight, when the water took on the tints of the sky, and the neighboring hills were wrapped in the soft, purplish mantle of night.

Frequently at dusk we walked to Ocean Park and Venice, or rode to these adjacent beaches on the "trams," a novel mode of transportation which brought Mildred and me much fun.

We gave over the greater part of the mornings at Santa Monica to the practice of the summer's lessons, as at this particular stage of my development in the dance, I could not drop the work for a day, scarcely, without seriously affecting what we had already accomplished in fixing it in my consciousness.

It was, indeed, fortunate that we spent this time on the new dances; for in October, not long after our return to Muskogee, Mother had an attack of the Spanish Influenza, which illness necessitated a pause in all my work for many weeks. We had barely taken up my studies again, when I, too, contracted the disease, and it was not until late in the winter that we could go on with them.

As Mildred had completed grammar-school the spring preceding our trip to California, when she was eleven, Mother had not had her enter the eighth grade,—Junior High School,—that autumn, thinking it best for her to devote her time instead to her music and language lessons. In the spring Mother decided that the time had

arrived when Mildred should have violin instruction under better teachers, and that in July we would take up our residence in Ithaca, and remain there for a year, so that she might study with the same teacher she had had the summer we were at Candor,—Mr. Egbert of the Ithaca Conservatory of Music.

Upon leaving Muskogee for the East, we went directly to New York City and spent a month there, during which time I had some class and private work in Nature dancing at the Vestoff-Serova School. I loved these lessons which were made so vivid and colorful by Madame Serova's charming personality and beautiful dancing. Mildred entered the classes with me, also had private instruction in Russian dancing with Mr. Vestoff. Besides this, she had lessons in French and Italian at the Berlitz School of Languages.

My study of dance-numbers theretofore had been along the line which most befitted me,—the æsthetic-interpretative,—and at this time my repertoire of dances contained none representing the strictly athletic type. Lately there had been growing in Mother's mind the conviction that until I gave over some time to lessons and practice of this more active kind of dancing, and could do such movements off the floor as jumps, leaps, etc., my æsthetic work would never reach a high degree of artistry.

So, when Madame Serova arranged my wood-nymph dance to classical music while we were there, certain changes had to be made, and movements added, to con-

Late spring, 1919.

A nature interpretation—Summer of 1919.

form to the musical composition. And, as a result of Mother's discussion with her of my need for work which would bring me off the floor, a variety of athletic poses and actions were incorporated in this broader dance for Mother and me to later work out ourselves.

In my visits to the Metropolitan Museum that month, I spent many an hour studying the masterpieces of painting and sculpture, sketching poses from them which I thought might prove helpful to me in the building of new dances, and viewing other forms of art that appealed to me.

Shortly after our arrival in Ithaca, I was back on the usual full schedule of study with Mother, which included speech, grammar and composition, history, geography, music, and, of course, the dance.

I have never studied music or any other subject at the Ithaca Conservatory, as many seem to think by reason of my having been there so much with Mother for Mildred's lessons. I did, however, practice my dancing there that year, in the Conservatory Theatre, from seven-thirty to nine each night and for an hour every day, Mother having arranged for the use of this larger space so that we could develop the athletic phase and build dance-movements into a rhythmical whole.

I did not like the athletic practice, and opposed it just as I had done all along, in the working out of steps and poses requiring more than ordinary effort. I was perfectly satisfied with the style of dancing I had been spe-

cializing in,—the æsthetic-interpretative,—and resented being made uncomfortable by this more strenuous practice. My attitude throughout all these periods was one of pretended inability to imitate the lessons which Mother repeatedly demonstrated for me.

Weeks of effort on her part failed to effect any improvement in the technicalities under study. Then, one night, after striving with me for more than an hour, coaxing me as usual into trying for the higher and farther jump, which she knew I was capable of making, she gave me to understand that unless I made a sincere attempt to improve this particular action, she would hold me to the practice till morning. And she did, almost, for she kept me at it for over three hours, until I began to manifest the spirit desired of me.

Two months from that time I was doing a very creditable leap and jump, as well as other athletic movements of advanced character, and performed them with an enjoyment which I had never thought possible. I delighted in the feeling of buoyancy which this form of dancing gave me, and marveled at the ease with which I could now execute some simpler movement that had theretofore seemed difficult.

We gave an hour each day to some dance from my repertoire, with a view to putting the various parts together so that they would move along without breaks in rhythm and sudden changes in tempo. In this work of perfecting my dancing, it was necessary for us to have a

Above: "A Garden Dance."
Below: A pose from the dance "On a Silver Strand."

Athletic development, year of 1909. "Diana of the Chase."

musician who would play true to form, so that Mother could get into my consciousness, through the skin perceptions, correct impressions of the tempos within the musical accompaniment.

I had not yet reached the point in my dancing where I could perform a movement twice alike in tempo; and, as most of the pianists we had to play for us persisted in watching me as I danced, and changing the music in accordance with their observations, it was impossible for us to arrive at any fixed standard of musical time for the establishing of rhythm, with such inadequate playing to work by.

By autumn Mildred had so studied and practiced the music to my dance-numbers that she was able to play many of them for us on her violin, and there was an end to the loss of time and energy occasioned by trying to work with persons who did not understand my needs. Mother had only to suggest that Mildred play with her back toward us, for us to get the musical guide which was necessary for my progress.

Then, in the winter, it happened that Edward Royce, eminent teacher and composer, who was Mildred's harmony instructor at the Conservatory, kindly offered his services as accompanist for occasional work with us on the dances whose music was not adaptable to the violin, or too difficult for her to play at that time. Naturally, a musician of his caliber knew instinctively what was desired of him; and with his valuable assistance, along with

Mildred's, and the influence of the athletic practice, which we had been following so persistently, all my dances,—some thirty in number,—were going beautifully before the winter was over.

Knowing that I would always have to dance to music which I could not hear, with no such external stimulus to the emotions as colorful music affords, Mother realized that I would have to make of my mind a veritable storehouse of thoughts from which I could draw as circumstances demanded.

So that winter I began a broad course of reading on subjects which would prove helpful to me in my dance-interpretations. I already had a mental background for the enhancing of my nature work; but, until I could travel to foreign lands, and absorb something of the life of the people whose dances I was trying to imitate, I would have to get my inspiration from literature depicting the customs and emotions typical of every nationality.

Here, in Ithaca, I found a veritable wonderland of scenic beauty which furnished material in abundance for the building of the themes I was still required to write daily. Throughout the summer and autumn I had taken long walks many times a week, and drives now and then, until every feature of the city and its adjacent country for miles around had become familiar to me. It was on such walks through woodland paths beside some gorge, or hikes to lakeside points, where rocky walls rose

high and stretched far along the shore, that I was led into the new study of geology.

Now winter, with its snow and ice, was giving me new scenic pictures to observe and write about, and making many a question in geology more interesting for study and discussion.

As this was my first winter in the North with a mind capable of understanding and appreciating its wonders, one can imagine how keenly I enjoyed every moment of it. The snow, that season of 1919-1920, never left the ground from December the second until the first day of April. What happy experiences those four months held for me! Mildred and I had exciting times coasting down steep streets, riding over the country roads to the merry jingle of sleigh-bells, and watching the college boys and girls go sailing past our place on their skiis.

Then came May, bringing me the delights of a New York State springtime, so different from that of Oklahoma. Here, Spring advanced slowly, cautiously, as though she were afraid to venture forth and bring the earth to warmth again. But oh! how lavish was she with scent and bloom when she finally decided to descend upon us.

Early in the month there was an interval of rest from all my studies, for Mother took Mildred and me to New York City for a week of pleasure. Upon our return we resumed the work, and continued it without a break until we left for Muskogee in the autumn.

Then there began a period of practice on my music and dancing such as I had never had before, for I was getting ready for another appearance in this, my home city. I was to make my début at the Orpheum Theatre as a professional.

Mildred's progress in music had fulfilled Father's and Mother's hopes for her, and she was well prepared to assist me on this classical program. The previous spring, at the age of thirteen, she had been presented by Mr. Egbert, her teacher, in a recital in the Conservatory Theatre at Ithaca, on which occasion she had used some of the larger works for violin, thereby winning for herself the distinction of being the youngest person to ever have given a full evening's program of such character in that musical institution.

I often think of those busy days, and how Mother and Mildred worked for my success in this dance recital. As Mildred was to stand in the orchestra pit and lead the music for my dances, also give solos between my numbers, she not only had her own music to work on, but mine as well. Besides this regular practice on both sets of music, and on the Russian dance she was to do, she had to spend several hours a day playing for my piano and dance practice, so that Mother could eliminate every flaw from the numbers and bring them to a state of synchronization with Mildred's violin music.

During the many weeks of practice for perfection in the execution of these numbers, I was never allowed to

In the costume for her old-time piano numbers.

A pose from the dance which she did to the victrola accompaniment on the Orpheum Theatre program, Nov. 9, 1920.

work on any part of a dance or piano selection by myself, or go through it in its entirety, lest I unconsciously fall into habits of faulty tempos and rhythm.

When the time came for the rehearsing of the program as a whole, Mother found that I so lived into the varied dance-interpretations, that it was hard for me to dismiss the basic tempo of a number from my mind at its conclusion, and start the next dance, after Mildred's solo, in the right tempo. So Mother conceived the idea of giving me, before each dance, the correct musical time which I was to start with, by tapping out the beats of one or two measures on my shoulder as I stood waiting for Mildred to take her "bows" after her solo.

Of all the dances I was preparing for this program, the one which I was to do to the accompaniment of a phonograph required the greatest amount of time and concentrated effort in practice. This was a most difficult task, indeed, that Mother had set for me; for there could be no uncertainty of steps, no fumbling with the long crêpe de Chine scarf in its intricate handling, else I would gain or lose a count, and thereby come out ahead or behind of the music when the final chord was sounded.

With this dance, it was necessary for me to remember the exact numbers (in my mental counting of a pose or series of steps), on which I had to start and end each change I made in the position of the scarf; and, as these shiftings seldom occurred on the same counts, I had an

unusually complicated picture of numbering to hold in my mind to dance by.

I thought I could never be any happier than I was that night of the concert, when my costumes were all in place in the dressing-room, the stage in readiness for my opening dance, and I was taken out in front to see how my curtains would appear to the audience. These stage settings had been made for me months before by one of the large New York City scenic studios, whose artist, in designing them, had studied my type so that the proper atmosphere could be created for my different numbers.

But how mild seemed the happiness I had felt before the concert, in comparison with that which filled my heart to overflowing afterward, when I was given complete accounts of how the large audience had received my various dances, and had time to admire the many flowers and gifts that had been sent me.

What a satisfaction it was to know that the unusually long applause after the phonograph number had been in appreciation of my performing it in unison with the music from beginning to end, as well as for its pictorial value; and that my two piano selections, in which I had accompanied Mildred (who played her violin from behind a screen so as to make the number mine insofar as possible), had been regarded by many as even more remarkable than my dancing to music which I could not hear!

I enjoyed doing my "Carmen" dance probably more

than any other number on this program, because of its romantic and dramatic character, and for the reason that I wore the shawl which I had embroidered myself.

An out-of-town musician, whom Mildred and I met in a friend's home that same week, declared, after seeing me do a dance to Mildred's violin accompaniment, and hearing us play together the piano and violin selections we had used at this concert, that I had felt the vibrations from her instrument, and had followed them, this being the only way, he said, that I could possibly have kept in unison with her.

Although we explained to him the methods by which I had been taught music and the dance, and emphasized the fact that the use of vibrations had never entered into my development in the least,—that I could have played or danced to Mildred's music just as well had she been in another room,—he still insisted that he was right, that if she were to repeat the numbers and play them faster or slower, I would immediately sense the new order, and change my tempos to agree with hers.

As Mildred's and my aim that evening was to please our hostess, and not to offend her by producing piano music and dancing out of harmony with the violin, the person alluded to was never shown that he was entirely wrong in his theory.

So completely do I depend upon my mental counting and the reading of the notes when playing the piano, that had the gentleman I have mentioned turned a page

of the music for me, the timing which he would have allowed for the action would have been so unlike that which I was accustomed to be guided by, that it would have caused a break in rhythm and playing, and resulted in a failure to get into the swing of the music again.

I do not wish to imply that my piano playing is always absolutely perfect in tempos and rhythm, and that my sister, in performing with me, never has to favor me; but the deviations which I may happen to make in the timing of a hold, a retard, or an accelerando are so slight, musicians tell me, as to be scarcely noticeable.

Neither do I wish to give the impression that I am a brilliant pianist, for I have never set out to accomplish this. I have confined my efforts principally to the playing of such numbers as old-time songs, arranged for violin and piano; and my repertoire does not exceed twenty pieces.

Strange and varied, indeed, are the ideas which many have entertained regarding my development.

One woman, in speaking of my education under my step-mother's tutelage, offered the opinion that her success with me had been due to the fact that she was not my own mother, and therefore did not have natural motherly sympathy.

Another stranger, on mere supposition, made the remark that it was certainly fortunate for me that we had had the "wherewithal" with which to so develop me.

As though mere money could ever have made me what I am today!

This train of thought brings me to the question, so puzzling to many, of what educational equipment my mother-teacher had when she undertook the task of transforming my life.

How often have I, as well as other members of the family, been approached with the exclamations: "What a wonderful college education your mother must have had to fit her for the work with you!" "What a broad course in normal school she must have pursued!"

When persons so speaking are informed that my mother had no normal training in deaf or hearing school, and no experience whatever with deaf children to aid her, they are at a loss to understand how it was possible for her to accomplish so much with me without such preparation for the work.

After all, what curriculum of any school offers a course of study that would have taught her how to tear down, uproot, and overcome successfully the ill-habits formed during the twelve most impressionable years of my life; nor on the other hand have taught her how to awaken and nurse into normal activity the powers that had remained literally dormant in me from babyhood. She had only her innate originality, resourcefulness, determination, perseverance, and common-sense with which to cope with the situation. She had no established prece-

dents to guide her, no methods of procedure applicable to a child of my age, but was forced to create her own methods to meet my particular needs, as each new occasion arose day by day.

Neither is Mother the fine performer on the piano that many seem to think; in fact, she plays scarcely at all, there having been but little time in her busy life for her to put into practice the slight knowledge of music which she acquired when a girl. But she is a musician at heart, and knew how to bring into my silent world something of her ever-broadening understanding and conception of it.

I know that no truer statement was ever made than that which came to me indirectly from a world-famous dancer,—that had my mother had half the time to devote to herself that she has given to me, the country would long ago have seen a great artist in any line that she might have wished to develop.

CHAPTER XXIV

I Stand at the Threshold of a Normal Existence

We remained in Muskogee that winter of 1920 but two months after my recital, it having been planned that Mildred would return to Ithaca early in the year for work with Otakar Sevcik, who had been engaged as master-teacher at the Conservatory. Of course, in the interim, I studied and practiced as usual, and read extensively.

So in January, I was again accompanying Mother and Mildred to Ithaca, but not to live in the city as we had done the year before; for, the preceding summer, my father had bought a place of one hundred and ten acres overlooking Lake Cayuga, just four miles from town, so that we could have more of the comforts of a home while staying in the East. We named this beautiful spot "Onapah-on-Cayuga," at the suggestion of our dear friend, Miss Alice Robertson of Oklahoma.

Then followed ten months of happy life in the country. When I first arrived at Onapah, Uncle John, who was with us again, told me, with a twinkle in his eye, that all artists pursued some hobby, hinting that I should begin to think seriously of cultivating one.

I had always loved chickens, and it did not take me long to decide what my hobby would be. Thus it came about that very shortly I was caring for a little flock of Columbian Wyandottes, and looking forward eagerly to the time when I could set some of them (for I could not then be persuaded to use an incubator for the hatching).

The hens had all appeared so much alike in habits that I never suspected, when I gave them their eggs to sit upon, that I would be furnished with such an interesting study of human nature in chickens. I found that no two accepted their responsibilities in the same manner, or exhibited the same traits when I approached their nests or petted them; hence, I named these hens after women of my acquaintance, giving to each the name of the friend of whom the hen's actions most reminded me.

My chickens are my hobby still, and the breed the same with which I started.

I probably accomplished more in reading that year than I had ever done in any two or three years together; for my speech and music and dance development was such that I no longer had to give over long periods daily to intensive practice of these subjects, as had previously been necessary. I found that an hour a day on the piano, under Mother's or Mildred's supervision, the same length of time on oral reading and the vocal scale-work, and an hour and a half on the dance sufficed to keep these sub-

"The Orientale."

A pose from the dance "A Sculptor's Dream."

jects technically and rhythmically correct. And I could even drop any one of them occasionally for several days at a time without encountering much difficulty when taking up the practice again.

Four months before, had I dropped my piano practice for a week, Mother would have had to work with me for days on time and rhythm to reëstablish the former standard of playing. Likewise had this been true of dancing, in the matter of my forgetting the mental "feel" of certain variations in tempo into which I had been trained. Too, technique and rhythm of speech, as well as the vocal scale-work, had had to be drilled upon for long periods daily in order to preserve the qualities in my speech that had been put there.

The practice of oral reading from some book, or talking a selection from memory while I walked, as I had been required to do for many years, had been a dull form of study until we came to Onapah and I had the long veranda to walk on as I talked, and the lovely panorama of hills and woods and lake to feast my eyes on from time to time during this activity.

On the veranda, too, I pursued the other studies and my reading throughout the summer months, until the chilly air of autumn made it necessary for me to go indoors, to the cozy nook at the end of the living-room, where I loved to study in the winter, by the big landscape window.

In these spots, from that time until now, I have

studied books on music and the dance, and the science of speech, delved into Wells' "Outline of History," and many of the works of Shakespeare, broadened my knowledge of geography, geology, civics, biology, astronomy, English composition and rhetoric; and, in reading, have become familiar with the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome, covered the standard classics of fiction and many another story of merit, completed my trips around the world with Stoddard, Carpenter, and Holmes, besides reading many a book on foreign lands by other authors, and lived, through the magic of the printed word, in all periods of history, from early Egypt to the present day.

Yet today, if a high-school professor were to give me an examination which included problems in algebra, geometry, or even higher arithmetic, as well as a certain phase of history, he would find me greatly wanting in these subjects, and might think that my education had been sadly neglected.

Arithmetic had always been an uninteresting study to me, and when the time came that the solving of the more advanced problems made me extremely irritable, and I was similarly affected by thoughts of warfare, in my lessons of American history, Mother had seen the wisdom of dropping arithmetic from my schedule entirely, and not requiring me to wade through lengthy descriptions of battles and the maneuvers of opposing forces.

In December Mother, Mildred, and I were traveling westward again. Probably Mother had no problem quite

"The Bead Plastique."

A Sculptural Pose.

so difficult to meet as that of looking after the interests of each member of the family (barring my brother, who was most happily married), in such a manner that one would not be neglected for the other. The trips to Oklahoma so as to be with Father had no effect upon my progress, for my studies went on with Mother wherever we were. But they worked a great hardship upon Mildred, as they took her away from her violin teachers, and left her without instruction for months at a time.

It was during this visit home in the winter of 1921 that we contracted for a series of dance and music concerts in the state, which included one in Oklahoma City. I also did a group of dances, assisted by Mildred, at the Orpheum Theatre in Muskogee, on the program which was a feature of the Seventeenth District Conference of Rotary Clubs.

Some months prior to this time, I had entered a national contest for beauty of face and figure conducted by *Physical Culture Magazine*, having had photographs made especially for this purpose the summer before. It was shortly before we had left Ithaca that the announcement came to me that I had won second place in the contest. I was fairly overcome with joy at the news, for did not this successful competition with hearing girls mean that at last I stood at the threshold of normality, with a face and figure bearing none of the marks of a deaf person.

I did no more concert work until a year and a half

later, but spent the intervening time in study and practice as usual, in Muskogee and at Onapah. Then, in October, 1923, Mildred broke into her violin studies (then under César Thomson) long enough for me to give another series of performances, this time in some of the large cities of the south-central part of New York State.

These dance-recitals included one at the Lyceum Theatre in Ithaca, where I had made so many friends. During this program, a woman in the audience, sitting in front of some one who knew me intimately, questioned the veracity of statements she had heard or read regarding my deafness, by remarking to her companion that she did not believe I was deaf. When this thought was communicated to me, I accepted it as a great compliment and felt that I had, indeed, achieved the naturalness which we had been working for in my music and dancing.

With these concerts over, and realizing that it would be several years before Mildred's violin studies could again be interrupted for appearances with me, I began to go over the notes on my life which I had been making for some time, with a view to writing this story during the years I would be waiting for her.

So, here in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region, whose scenes have contributed so much to my development, I started this history of my life some three years ago. And here, in the same inspiring spot, I bring it to a close.

The years of hard study and practice are over; for today, my speech requires but slight attention for the

Japanese Terpsichore.

A Spanish Interpretation.

preservation of its natural qualities,—inflection, modulation, accent, emphasis, and rhythm,—and my dancing and music are pursued more as a pleasure than a study, a recreation from this writing.

I dance, and practice the piano free from any help whatever, though I would need considerable coaching from Mother or Mildred in working up old or new numbers for a program. In the past few years I have created several dances with a view to use when the opportunity comes, and in the last year have worked up two new piano numbers unassisted, except for occasional suggestions from Mother and Mildred on points of tempo, rhythm, and interpretation.

Mother tells me that the carrying quality of my voice, also its strength, has not yet become quite like that of the hearing person, thus making it difficult for strangers to understand me in noisy places. Hence, we still practice certain exercises, including the singing, to build up the speech muscles which were so weakened by the long years of disuse. The fact that strangers have taken this quality, peculiar to my voice, which I have mentioned, for nothing more than huskiness resulting from a slight cold, and that little children converse with me without even suspecting that I am other than a hearing person, makes me supremely happy. My laugh, I am told, is every bit as musical as that of the normal girl.

I have long ceased to give over any time to lip-reading drills, finding the practice I get in actual conversation

enough without it. I have, however, concluded that it is best to devote regular periods to the practice of speech fundamentals, just as a fine musician practices the technique of his instrument in order that his art may endure.

My lip-reading is such that when I come into a room where others are talking, or look up from my book when reading, I can, after giving close attention to the speakers for a few moments, pick up the thread of the conversation and enter into it myself, without assistance from any one as to the subject that is being discussed.

Neither is distance a barrier to me in lip-reading, for many a time, when shopping, for instance, I have taken thoughts from Mother's or Mildred's lips from one department to another in a store, and even across the street after I had left them to do some errand by myself.

It is impossible for me, though, to read the lips of a man with a heavy mustache. Nor can I understand a person who exaggerates the movements of his lips and so draws out his syllables that I cannot tell where words begin and end; for, as I have heretofore explained, I have been trained to read speech just as it flows naturally from one's lips.

The method of reading the lips of a person's shadow upon the wall, which Mother originated for me and brought into the lip-reading practice long ago, is now a source of much pleasure to me when I entertain my friends with this novel manner of conversing.

Contrary to the thought, entertained by many, that

it must be quite a bore for me to sit through a play or opera, I thoroughly enjoy the theatre, and have for years derived much benefit from it. Nothing delights me more than to watch great actors and actresses, trained in the art of making their features talk as well as their lips, as they enact some story which I have read, or unfold one that is new to me. Recitals of piano, violin or orchestra music, however, hold little interest for me after I have studied the personalities and costumes of the players or singers.

I have long wanted a bit of travel to foreign lands, and a winter in some large city where I would have the opportunity of seeing everything worth while in the way of theatrical productions. In the coming year my dreams are to be realized, for I am to spend some time in New York City with Mildred, who is pursuing her violin studies there under Leopold Auer, she having completed her high-school work in Ithaca a year and a half ago, and later graduating with honors from the Ithaca Conservatory of Music; and in the summer, when she goes to Europe for a long period of study with her former teacher, César Thomson, I am to visit the distant countries I have been so anxious to see. Afterward, I shall probably take up my dancing in earnest, in a broad professional way.

And now I come to the end of this story of my development,—a long and laborious task of writing; for one cannot live the first twelve years of one's life without

speech, and with as little language expression through other mediums as I had, and then be able to set down her thoughts easily, even though years of time be afterward devoted to the study and practice of language.

Many are the hours I have spent on certain paragraphs in these chapters, in order that they would express just the thought I wanted them to convey. My dictionary, thesaurus, synonym book, and the Correct English series, bear the marks of long and faithful service, proof of the many searches I have made through their pages for some word, only to wonder, after I had captured it and dwelt upon it, if it was the right word after all.

My object in writing this story of my life, however, has not been to produce a literary masterpiece, but rather to present my message of emancipation for the benefit of others. And if I have made myself clear in setting down the facts of the process by which I was lifted from a life of dumbness and ignorance into a world of knowledge and joyful expression, the purpose of this book will have been fulfilled.

THE END.